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**Final Report:
Evaluation of WRC Research Competitions Program**

May 2008

Women's Rights and Citizenship Program
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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from an evaluation of four WRC research competitions. One is the stand-alone Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure (GGL) competition launched in 2002 by IDRC's Gender Unit (predecessor of the current Women's Rights and Citizenship Program, or WRC). The other three make up a series on Women's Rights and Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA-D), South Asia (SA-D), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC-D). A preliminary report presented findings from the GGL and SSA-D competitions; this final one incorporates findings on the remaining two.

With the exception of two very problematic projects, one in GGL and one in SSA-D, that had to be closed, the competitions met their key stated objectives. There were variations in the quality of research and other results, but overall, the research funded matched the competition themes, generated new and significant knowledge, and advanced other objectives such as promoting methodological learning, building capacity, engaging in relevant action with and for marginalized women and their organizations in the South, and generating policy influence.

Reasons for choosing competitions as a programming strategy tended to be pragmatic rather than reflecting a vision of the particular value-added of competitions. Objectives for the competitions included mainstreaming and internal, IDRC-oriented goals, methodological innovation (GGL), and the generation of knowledge in a policy-relevant area (the decentralization competitions).

The GGL theme was chosen largely for its fit with other work at IDRC. The choice of the decentralization and women's rights theme resulted from discussions within and outside the Centre. Because there was a strong emphasis in the GGL competition on methodology, the research topics themselves were quite diverse; the decentralization competitions were more focussed, although there was still significant diversity in approach and subtopics.

All four competitions targeted experienced researchers, but although the calls for proposals (CFPs) generated a large response, the quality of proposals received varied, as did the profiles of the lead researchers. As the projects moved forward, it became plain that some had greater capacity than others to carry out high quality research on the project themes; however, the evaluation does not point to a clear correlation between specific awardee profiles and results. Particularly in the decentralization competition, in which policy influence was important, it is interesting to note the potential trade-off between academic credentials, research experience, and activist or advocacy experience and connections.

The main administrative issue in the competitions had to do with delays in completing projects. In the GGL competition, all the projects were extended by as much as one or even two years beyond their planned finish dates, and projects in all four competitions finished after the planned dates for a wide variety of reasons. Overall, 24-month projects came closer to finishing on time than 18-month ones, suggesting that 18 months may not be realistic. From the IDRC end, the competitions turned out to be labour and time-intensive to manage. The LAC-D competition set out to ease this pressure by outsourcing management to FLACSO-Argentina; but even in this case, the competition was time and labour-intensive for WRC staff.

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Outsourcing management of the LAC-D competition to another institution was a generally positive experience, although gains in terms of easing WRC workload were minor. There were some rough spots in the process, and for future such arrangements, the relationship and its objectives—especially the balance and trade-offs between capacity-building and network expansion on the one hand and workload reduction on the other—need to be better defined within IDRC and made clear to all concerned. Roles and responsibilities of IDRC and the contracted institution should also be specified in greater detail. Assigning someone from IDRC (in this case a PDA) full time as the main contact and support person during the initial stages of the arrangement proved essential.

Researchers were generally very satisfied with the competitions, were enthusiastic about their research, felt communication with IDRC (or FLACSO-Argentina in the LAC-D case) were smooth, found reporting requirements reasonable, and reported that the level and type of support from project officers was appropriate. IDRC project officers, on the other hand, were sometimes unhappy with the quality of reports and found monitoring difficult in some cases, especially in the GGL and SSA-D competitions.

With the exception of the failed projects, all the projects generated a significant amount of data and pertinent research results. Especially in the SSA-D competition, there were disjunctures in some cases between the quantity and the quality of data generated, and between data collection and analysis. Also in the SSA-D competition, some projects were weak in their analysis and exploration of the key competition themes of decentralization and gender. Nevertheless, given the lack of gender-oriented research on decentralization in the region, all the projects made an important contribution. Since final reports from the SA-D and LAC-D competitions have not yet been submitted at time of writing, their final outcomes cannot be fully assessed, but all the evidence suggests they will be positive.

The GGL competition emphasized methodological innovation and provided considerable support in this area to the researchers, but building researchers' capacity was not an identified objective of any of the competitions. Nevertheless, most of the projects did build capacity in one way or another—directly in the research teams, through the research process, workshops, monitoring, and exchanges amongst researchers; or indirectly, in the form of learning by policymakers or grassroots groups involved in the research process in many projects. In some cases, researchers had little prior experience in gender-focused research and gained capacity in this area by participating in the competitions. Many of the projects had partnerships or links with grassroots organizations built into their research, and through these “gave back” something to the communities or organizations involved in the research. The action-research link seemed more solid in cases where the host institution or key researchers had a history of active community engagement.

Forming networks was not an explicit goal of the competitions but IDRC staff had some hopes in this regard. In GGL, opportunities for face-to-face meetings and work on a joint publication created some conditions for networking but the thematic and geographic diversity of the projects made network formation difficult and prospects for sustainability poor. In the SSA-D competition, the lack of face-to-face meetings or other contact between researchers during the competition cycle meant there were virtually no networking results. Both the South Asia and

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LAC competitions included more opportunities for exchange among researchers, with variable results, and it seems more likely that some of these connections may be sustained.

All the competitions generated policy influence results, but they are varied and difficult to assess. The major policy outcomes for GGL as a whole will depend largely on the dissemination of the IDRC-co-ordinated publication, which will also showcase the methodological advances and learning gained through the projects. This publication has been proceeding very slowly but looks set to be completed sometime in 2009. The diversity of projects in the GGL competition limited opportunities for drawing broad policy conclusions, but individual projects were policy relevant within their local contexts and some project leaders were able to capitalize on this fact.

For the three decentralization competitions, the conference being planned for November 2008 in Mexico should help consolidate and utilize the competition's policy relevant findings, as should the global publication currently in planning. At the regional and project level, actual and potential policy influence is variable, with some projects having well-organized and targeted plans, others successfully taking advantage of opportunities in a more ad hoc manner, and some doing little. In the SA-D and LAC-D competitions, several research teams were well placed in terms of government contacts or activist experience and many looked set to make good use of the research. Nevertheless, few of the projects had strong advocacy or dissemination strategies built in to their projects, and results in this area will depend largely on their capacity and commitment to use the research results in their ongoing work.

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I. Introduction

Women's Rights and Citizenship (WRC) is an IDRC program launched April 1st, 2006, falling within the Centre's Social and Economic Policy area. The program is motivated by a vision "of a just world where women in the South have a sense of self that includes citizenship and the right to have rights; where all individuals have equitable access to justice and the opportunity to participate meaningfully in democratic decision-making; and where there is no discrimination based on gender in realizing the full range of one's rights and freedoms, including economic rights and sexual and reproductive rights." In contrast to the gender mainstreaming mandate of its predecessor, the Gender Unit (GU), WRC is mandated to develop its own projects portfolio.

Since 2001, competitions were a key modality for achieving the objectives of the Gender Unit, and WRC continued to run competitions. In order to assess this programming choice, the WRC team contracted an evaluation of its own and the preceding GU research competition program. This evaluation began in August 2006, and examines four competitions: the Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure (GGL) competition; and the three regional women's rights and decentralization competitions, in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA-D), South Asia (SA-D) and Latin America (LAC-D).

An earlier report presented preliminary findings on the completed GGL and SSA-D competitions. This final report presents integrates findings from SA-D and LAC-D. It begins with an overview of the evaluation itself, moves on to findings, and ends with lessons learned and recommendations. Annexes present a list of interviews, a partial list of documents consulted, and some of the evaluation tools.

II. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs) state that the overall evaluation goal is "to inform the program in the process of designing and implementing upcoming competitions." The TORs and evaluation framework outline the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the competitions' selection process and approach;
2. Assess the implementation process of the competitions both in terms of concept and approach, and in terms of processes;
3. Assess the results of the two Gender Unit thematic competitions (outputs, reach and outcomes) and analyze their influence;
4. Provide reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the competition modality; and
5. Identify key lessons learned to feed into women's rights strategies for programming

The TORs stress WRC's desire for both a process and outcome evaluation—one that asks both about *how* the competitions are implemented, and *what* and *whether* objectives are met. A focus

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group discussion with the WRC team in August 2006 confirmed the evaluation framework. Team members said they wanted to learn more about what had actually been funded and the results, and gain a better understanding of whether the competition modality is a good way to meet WRC objectives. Another priority was to reflect on the experiment of outsourcing the competition modality in the LAC-D case.

The primary intended user for the evaluation is the WRC Program team. Other audiences include other IDRC staff and stakeholders such as awardees and partner organizations.

Using the TORs and a skeletal logical framework analysis as a starting point (see Annex 1), an evaluation framework and matrix were prepared, articulating issues and questions from the TORs in more detail, along with indicators, and data sources (see Annex 2). This report roughly follows the categories in the framework.

A total of nearly 50 interviews with IDRC staff, awardees, and others were an important source of information. (See Annex 3 for list of interviews, Annex 4 for sample Interview Protocol.) Many were conducted in person, some by telephone, and a few as email questionnaires. Most lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. They were transcribed and results sent to interviewees for confirmation. Informal conversations and email exchanges with WRC staff on various matters supplemented formal interviews. Other sources were documents such as calls for proposals, proposals, project reports, trip reports and related correspondence, and observation (in particular, during the Buenos Aires and Dakar workshops).

Data from interviews and other sources were organized according to the evaluation categories in a matrix, and in project grids (See Annex 5: Sample Project Grid) in order to link information gathered to the relevant evaluation questions and help identify and strengthen corroborated evidence from various sources.

The strongest point in the methodology is that open-ended interviews with key stakeholders permitted a detailed and flexible qualitative assessment of the projects and processes. However, a weakness of the methodology was its reliance on a few key stakeholders for information. Since the evaluation did not include field visits or interviews with third parties such as research partners or community members, possibilities for corroborating evidence were limited. In addition, although comparison amongst the projects helps explain how and why each project or competition unfolded as it did, the small size of the sample and the many differences amongst individual projects and amongst the competitions make it difficult to draw strong conclusions.

Another limitation is that although the evaluation period was extended, in part so that final results from the SA-D and LAC-D competitions could be assessed, these projects were not yet complete at time of writing. Not having the final project reports, it is difficult to adequately assess the research results. On the positive side, most of these projects produced informative interim reports and other material.

Finally, it should be noted that I prepared the initial gender and decentralization background paper and have had other substantive roles related to the decentralization competitions (presenting at workshops and being involved in the final publication). This fact gives me an advantage but also creates the possibility of bias since it gives me a stake in the success of these

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competitions. However, I have tried to separate my role as external evaluator from my other roles and do not feel that there has been any negative impact.

III. Evaluation Findings

A. The competition modality

Between 2001 and 2006, competitions accounted for approximately one third of the total Gender Unit (GU) budget, making them a key part of the programming strategy.¹ What is the rationale for running competitions? A number of potential benefits of competitive grant programs are identified in IDRC's *Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010*, in other evaluations and reviews of competitive grants, and were identified during interviews, including:

- the transparency of competitive grant allocation processes
- opportunities for network creation
- opportunities for testing, training in, or encouraging particular methodological approaches
- opportunities to raise the visibility of "niche" or under-researched development issues
- opportunities to jump-start work on an issue identified as having strategic importance
- opportunities to identify new partners and high-calibre researchers
- lower labour inputs once the process is underway (this benefit is noted in the Corporate Strategy but questioned in other competitive grant evaluations, including this one)

IDRC staff mentioned a number of these advantages when asked about the origins of the GU/WRC competitions, but in practice competitions seem to have been chosen primarily for pragmatic reasons—on the assumption that they would require minimal time, staff and money to run; because they were "encouraged by senior management" (I-3); or—in the case of the GGL competition—because running a competition would take advantage of the experience of a sabbaticant (I-2).

"It [the competition modality] was a way to do some programming that didn't require programme development, individual trips, and was transparent, and we could manage with the staff we had." (I-2)

The competition modality was appreciated by the awardees, who emphasized that it is often difficult to get access to funds for research. The transparency of the selection process, and the fact that the competitions are open to new researchers and organizations are other points in favour of the modality, from researchers' point of view. Some also mentioned the benefit of being linked to various simultaneous projects on the same theme. One GGL awardee mentioned that her decision to apply was influenced by the fact that she "liked the idea of working with a range of people. I understood that other proposals would be selected and so we would be working alongside others looking at a range of issues." (G-1) And according to one of the

¹ In FY 2001-2002, when the GU budget was just \$620,000 competitions accounted for a relatively higher proportion than in later years. By FY 2005-2006, the budget had risen to \$2,605,000.

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"I think that this approach of putting institutions...especially development and civil society organizations, into competitions is good. I personally feel very encouraged and confident after getting this project through the competition." (S-5)

awardees in the SA-D competition, "It has been interesting to have this grounded experience and yet see commonalities across the globe." (S-1)

Given demands on the time of project officers and others, choosing competitions in the hopes that they will provide more results from less effort makes sense. However, the experience with these competitions suggests that competitions are not a programming shortcut. Running competitions well, and in

such a way as to reap some of their distinctive benefits with respect to comparative analysis, joint theoretical engagement, combined policy impact, networking, etc., is labour- and time-intensive. In addition, the competitive selection process, while it has the value of fairness and transparency and attracts new partners, is by the same token more risky than regular program development. Nevertheless, this evaluation suggests that competitions can produce results that make the effort worthwhile. Adopting a more strategic vision of the particular value-added of competitions—in terms of networking and enhanced dissemination and policy influence opportunities, for instance—would help make expectations about the time they require more realistic, and aid in the design of activities in the competition cycle that make the most of what this modality has to offer.

B. Competition objectives

The GGL competition responded to both parts of the GU's dual mandate—gender mainstreaming within IDRC, and developing its own gender-focussed research portfolio. According to the GGL project approval document (PAD), the competition's objectives were "to support gender-focused research on land tenure using an innovative methodology that explores links between the global and local context" and "to model gender-focused research in ENRM." The mainstreaming element was built in at the outset by including ENRM sabbaticant Dr. Fiona MacKenzie in planning and implementation, by consulting with ENRM staff, and through participation by ENRM staff in some competition activities. However, over time, efforts on mainstreaming declined, reflecting changes in GU leadership and priorities.

The decentralization series, meanwhile, was developed in the context of the planned transition from the mainstreaming-oriented GU to the WRC program. The series matched the WRC's mission, which is "to support research on women's rights and citizenship that uses gender and social analysis and focuses on the needs of poor and marginalized women in the South; that utilizes methodologies that are empowering to participants; and that engages meaningfully with decision-makers and policy debates, with a view to effecting change."

As expressed in the SSA-D PAD, the overall objective was "to generate and support research on the linkages between state decentralization reforms and decentralized systems of government and the protection and realization of women's rights in Sub-Saharan Africa." The other two regional competitions had similar overall objectives. A number of other objectives were also

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identified in the PADs, roughly similar in all three competitions, including supporting a “community of practice of researchers” in the field and producing policy-relevant research and recommendations. (See Annex 6: Comparison of PAD Decentralization Series Objectives) The SSA-D PAD also expressed internally directed objectives of generating interest and knowledge within IDRC on the decentralization and women’s rights theme and raising discussion of how the Centre “might position itself on the question of development and human rights.” These Centre-oriented objectives were reflected in the early phases of development of the competition through consultations across IDRC on the theme and background paper, but few further efforts were made on this front.

The LAC-D PAD differed from the others in that it referred specifically to formulating “evidence-based policy recommendations”—while the SA-D PAD simply referred to supporting “policy-relevant research” and the SSA-D PAD to “research dissemination activities that will inform other researchers, citizens and policy-makers.”

Awardees’ perceptions of competition objectives were generally consistent with staff expectations, the calls for proposals (CFPs) and—though less fully—the PADs. However, objectives expressed in the PAD were not always fully reflected in the calls for proposals (CFPs). For example, in GGL, both WRC staff and the PAD indicated that methodological innovation was an important objective, but it was not highlighted in the CFP. Since the competition kicked off with a workshop that emphasized methodology, its importance became clear to awardees early on; but more clarity about methodological objectives might have helped attract researchers with a particular interest in such issues. Similarly, Centre-oriented objectives such as mainstreaming were not included in CFPs. And although most decentralization awardees did mention policy influence in describing competition objectives, their emphasis on this area might have been strengthened by highlighting it in the CFPs, which were their main source of information about competition objectives. It would be helpful if awardees were made aware of WRC’s own mandate and mission (which, unlike other areas in IDRC is explicitly oriented to effecting change through policy engagement and action) and how the competitions fit within it. To that end, all the relevant objectives shared by IDRC staff and articulated in the PADs should be clearly expressed in the CFPs to ensure that awardees give them priority.

Background papers for each region also strengthened awardees’ sense of what the competition was intended to achieve. Unfortunately, although some awardees reported finding it useful in orienting their research, the paper used for the SSA-D competition did not have a regional focus since it was commissioned as a general background. While it was important in setting the stage for the series as a whole, it probably would have been helpful to have a regional paper along the lines of the ones prepared for South Asia and Latin America.

Another objective of the competitions, noted by staff, was to help assess the status of knowledge and research capacity in the fields of decentralization and women’s rights. The competitions were successful on this point; the experience in the projects demonstrated that this is a new and under-researched field. Particularly in the SSA-D case, WRC project officers were frustrated with the uneven results; however, the lesson learned is that there is a need for support to research capacity in this area in the region. WRC has already responded to this finding of the competition through the creation of a “Training Institute on Women’s Rights and Citizenship.”

Network-creation was not an explicit objective of the GGL competition, and was only vaguely defined as an objective in the decentralization competitions. It was most clearly expressed in the PAD for SA-D, which referred to using “the process of competitive grants to explore the possibility of creating knowledge networks beyond national borders in South Asia and, beyond, for generating knowledge on the questions of decentralisation and agency of the politically, socially and economically marginalised genders, ethnicities and castes.” However, interviews with WRC team members made it clear that networking was an implicit objective, and network formation is recognized as a potential benefit of competitions in IDRC’s Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010 and other small grants/competition reviews. According to one WRC team member, networking was a goal of the competitions, “but perhaps we have been wary of formalizing it as such because it depends so much on the willingness of the partners, and it is very hard to keep alive. It needs strong buy-in. But we saw it as something we wanted to do.” (I-3) Awardees were also enthusiastic—at least in principle—about opportunities for networking. The opportunity to network is one of the value-added characteristics of competitions and, as such, should be reflected in explicit objectives to ensure that due efforts are made in this area. Successful networking is difficult to achieve, but what is reasonably certain is that it will not happen spontaneously; therefore if it is an objective, it should be made explicit—identified and shared with all stakeholders, and linked to tangible goals and activities.

C. Research Themes and Topics

Competition themes and topics should advance WRC’s mission and match the strategic needs and interests of potential research and advocacy partners. Since competitions aim to do things

For me, for the organization I'll be doing the research with, and also for other women involved in these networks and organizations, I think this process will help us reflect on what we've been doing, on what's right, on how to change our practices. Because sometimes when we're in the midst of concrete action we stop seeing the gaps, the mistakes, how we should do things to be more effective. [...] I've been involved with these issues for years, and this seems to me like an opportunity to pause along the road and take a reading of what's been done, and to be critical, too.” (L-6)

such as “raise the visibility of ‘niche’ or under-researched development issues and jump-start sustainable work on strategically important issues, the themes chosen do not necessarily have to be ones that potential partners are already working on directly; but they do need to generate researchers’ and others’ commitment and enthusiasm, and make a reasonably good fit with partners’ ongoing work or organizational mandates. Such a fit increases the likelihood of meeting action and policy objectives. To be avoided is the scenario in which an organization or researcher’s pre-existing project is cosmetically altered to make it eligible for funding through the competition. This scenario seems to have been avoided in these competitions—with perhaps a couple of exceptions. Among other things, this fact suggests that good choices were made on the themes and topics.

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GGL

The “gender, globalization and land tenure” theme was chosen in part as an opportunity for the GU to link with IDRC’s Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) program, which had a history of gender-focused research. As one staff member said: “[I]t was a sensible entry point to cutting edge, relevant work, a good niche overlapping with other work in IDRC.” (I-2) The selection of the theme was also influenced by the expertise of IDRC sabbaticant Dr. Fiona Mackenzie. In other words, the GU’s mainstreaming mandate, subsequently de-emphasized, had an important influence on the selection of the GGL competition theme.

Once the theme was chosen, an international advisory committee participated in an electronic forum in October/November of 2001 to help develop “global and regionally specific cutting-edge research questions” and identify selection criteria. A broad range of sub-themes was identified: governance (including community, national, and international levels), HIV/AIDS, knowledge (including both local knowledge and intellectual property rights), and livelihood security/environmental sustainability (including such issues as food security and biodiversity). They were chosen with a view to consistency with ENRM’s research focus and to the methodological objective of linking micro and macro levels of analysis.

Considering the relatively short timeline, minimal staff available for monitoring, and the competition’s global reach, the spectrum of theme and subtopics may have been overly broad. Encouraging researchers in diverse regions to juggle several, albeit interlinked, topics, and simultaneously engage in a deeply reflective and rigorous methodological process, as the competition did, was likely to—and in fact did—produce an unwieldy research enterprise. On the positive side, some results were extremely rich; on the negative side, there were long delays in completing projects, and drawing shared policy implications proved challenging.

Nevertheless, the competition resonated with the awardees I interviewed. According to one, it was “a topic I’d been working on for some time. [...] I was attracted to it because globalization was a central theme, one of the three legs, along with gender and land tenure. I had been doing work on gender and land tenure and I was interested in looking at globalization and understanding how these were affected by international factors.” (G-1)

Decentralization series

The decentralization theme emerged from informal discussions within the GU and IDRC at large, followed by the preparation of a background paper. It involved an external and internal scoping exercise and literature review aimed at assessing the relevance and general level of interest in gender and decentralization as a research theme. It also suggested a research agenda. Two more background papers, each with its own regional focus and approach, were subsequently prepared to orient the SA-D and LAC-D competitions.

In comparison to GGL, the decentralization series of competitions was more narrowly focused. The decision to hold a series of regional competitions, rather than a single global competition, built on learning from GGL about the difficulty of managing a global competition and reflected an understanding of regional differences in the experience of decentralization.

One WRC officer identified a concern that the fairly detailed research agenda outlined in the background papers detracted from awardees’ opportunity to define their own research

Comment [MSOffice1]: I’d remove this section and provide ref to the doc for readers

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problems based on locally relevant concerns—a key part of the research process. (I-1) However, while the background papers were quite detailed, the range of research questions and subtopics identified was broad, and none of the awardees seemed to feel it had constrained them. In fact, several praised the openness communicated by the CFPs and the competitions overall. One researcher noted that IDRC had not set out “a line, an approach, in terms of theory, as a condition. That has made me feel very comfortable, that the issue and approach were open.” (L-4) If the competition is intended to produce a relatively coherent body of knowledge in a certain area, leading to joint research and policy conclusions, *more* rather than *less* direction may be appropriate.

D. Selection Process

Distribution

Distributing the CFP is a crucial step in the competition process, since the range and quality of distribution will significantly affect the quality of proposals received and the competition’s overall success. In GGL, the call was passed to various IDRC program officers to distribute to their contacts, as well as being sent to institutions such as the World Bank, CIDA, and others. The SSA-D call was distributed in a similar way.

In the LAC-D competition, WRC benefited from FLACSO-Argentina’s contacts in the region. FLACSO-Argentina sent approximately 1,800 e-mails and 2,000 posters to universities and research departments, NGOs, environmental organizations, research institutes, academic journals and magazines, and local, regional and thematic networks; as well as local offices of the UN. In addition, graduates of PRIGEPP (the Regional Training Program on Gender and Public Policy—the specific area within FLACSO-Argentina that hosted the competition) “played a leading role in promoting the Competition in their own countries and institutions.”² In SA-D, in addition to posting on the IDRC website, the CFP was posted on gender-related websites, and sent to partners, experts, and prominent women’s studies and gender studies departments in universities. The lead project officer reported that she “personally sent out 95 email messages” to her contacts.

How awardees heard of competition (of 15 interviewed)	
Direct from internet/email list/newsletter of which IDRC website identified by	10 1
Forwarded or mentioned by personal contact of which, an IDRC contact forwarded to	5 1

Of fifteen awardees interviewed, 10 reported seeing the CFP on the internet, an email list, or in a newsletter. Five reported that someone else forwarded it to them or personally encouraged them to apply (two of these also received the CFP directly via electronic means, but would not have applied without the additional personal contact; of these two, one received a personal

² FLACSO-Argentina, First technical report.
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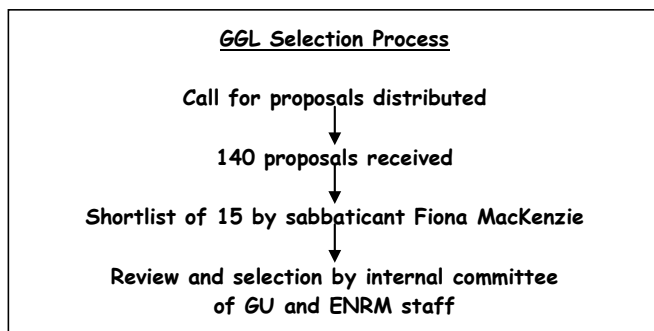
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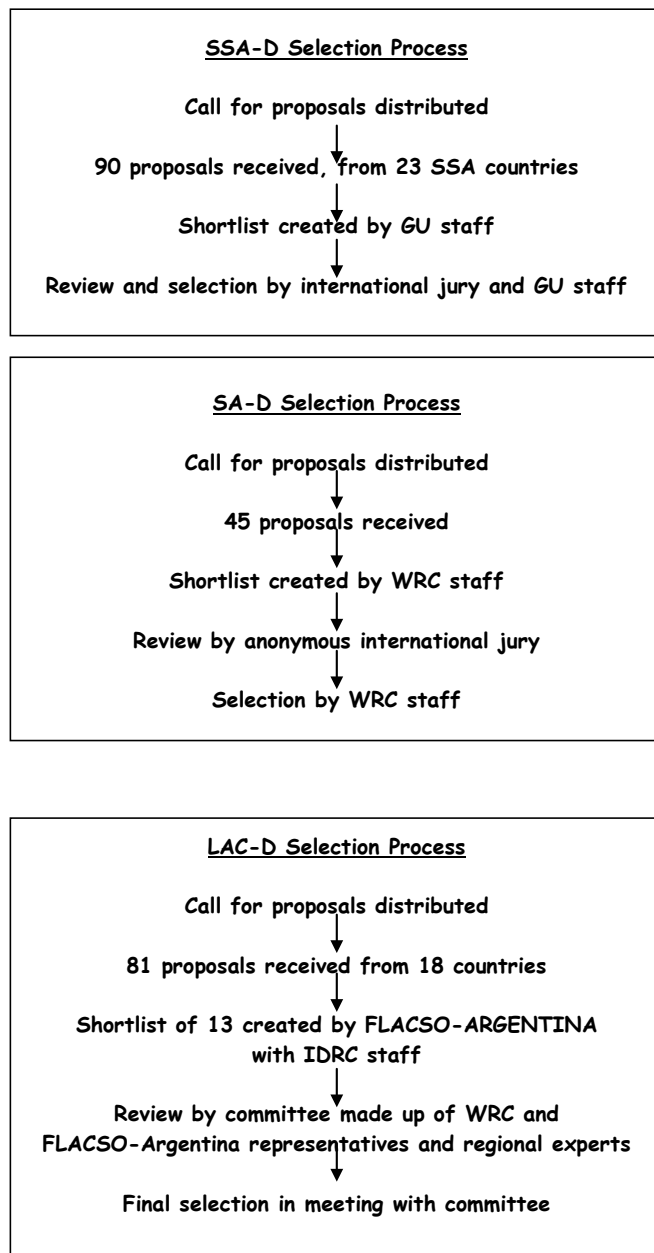
message from a contact at IDRC). This information highlights the importance of personal connections in the process. In the SSA-D competition—the one with the patchiest results overall none of the awardees reported personal referrals to the CFP. This fact suggests a possible correlation between capacity and awardees' integration into personal networks related to the thematic area (as opposed to simply being members of electronic networks or list subscribers). It also may reflect a lack of WRC contacts in SSA, and an overall lower capacity in this area among researchers and others in the region.

Distribution was adequate for alerting the experienced researchers targeted by all the competitions. But since competitions are supposed to attract researchers from “outside the loop,” creative dissemination methods—such as print ads in local newspapers or more personal follow-up—is important. Electronic distribution through the usual organizations inevitably misses some people, especially those working in places with undependable internet access, who spend a lot of time in the field, or who work in NGOs or grassroots institutions with fewer resources. It is worth noting that the GGL researcher most closely linked to grassroots organizations became aware of the competition through a personal contact, rather than via an electronic list, while the LAC-D researcher with the most “activist” credentials decided to apply only as a result of personal encouragement from colleagues.

We were looking for a certain level of capacity, so that would be people working in universities, institutions, completed or near completing their PhDs. (I-2)

Selection Process





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The response to the GGL CFP was large (140 proposals), but most proposals failed to meet technical and substantive criteria; creating a shortlist was therefore straightforward. The shortlist was reviewed by an internal committee comprised of program officers from ENRM, the GU coordinator, a GU project officer, and Dr. MacKenzie. The committee filled out a form and assigned points or grades to each application. Despite some “intense discussion” there was a general consensus that “some of the projects were rather weak” and it was “pretty clear which projects we would choose.” (I-2) Far from generating “leftover” promising projects that could not be funded through the competition (as occurred in the later SA-D and LAC-D competitions), one of the projects was accepted simply “on faith” that it could be improved by the methodology workshop. (I-2). This project, in Kenya, was later closed due to both research and institutional problems—highlighting the value of sticking with firm selection criteria.

The three decentralization competitions shared similar selection processes; the main difference between them and the GGL process was that their proposals were reviewed by experts from outside IDRC—a mix of academics, consultants, activists, and others. Most WRC officers were pleased with this external involvement in the selection process, although in the SA-D competition one reviewer failed to do the reviews and her contract had to be cancelled. The lead project officer here felt that she would have preferred a smaller jury in order to “keep it under control.” She also felt in retrospect that the terms of reference for the reviewers should have been more precise because: “[w]hile some reviewers wrote very helpful, detailed critical comments others wrote extremely short and not so helpful comments. They gave numerical scores which was fine but did not provide explanation.” (I-6) In the LAC-D competition, this problem was avoided by asking reviewers to provide written comments as well as numerical scores; in addition, there was a face-to-face meeting in Buenos Aires to discuss the short listed proposals.

In the LAC-D case, the selection process was managed by FLACSO-Argentina in co-operation with IDRC. It was an early test of the relationship between FLACSO and IDRC, and there was some confusion and consequently some tension over which institution—IDRC or FLACSO—had the final right to decisions over short listing and designating the members of the selection committee. The TORs stated that designating the selection committee was a joint responsibility, though they did not clarify precisely who had ultimate authority. With respect to short listing, IDRC saw this as a joint responsibility also. The TORs stated that the selected “collaborating institution” would be responsible for “reviewing the proposals received, ruling out those that do not meet the requirements of the terms of reference for the call for proposals and compiling a shortlist for subsequent evaluation by the members of the Selection Committee.”³ The MGC was less clear. In the end, the criteria for selecting projects—provided by IDRC—resolved the issue, but while the TORs were quite detailed, roles and responsibilities should have been even more clearly set out. Specifically, IDRC needs to ensure that TORs and MGCs structuring such arrangements fully reflect the degree and type of involvement and control it expects to have.

In all the competitions, the selection process—especially short listing—was very time-consuming. Assigning a PDA or intern to facilitate short listing may be a good idea. Since

³ WRC, *Términos de Referencia para la Selección de la Institución Coordinadora del Concurso de Investigación “Descentralización y Derechos de las Mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe,”* 3.

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WRC's PDA worked with the FLACSO-Argentina team on the short listing for the LAC-D competition, the outsourcing arrangement did not end up saving time or labour for WRC – but at least project officers did not have to be directly involved.

In the SSA-D competition, 90 proposals were received from across the region, but there were many weak proposals even within the shortlist, and enough disagreement over one of those ultimately selected that it had to be chosen by vote rather than consensus. The proposal was considered weak, but the lead researcher had a good track record, and the gender analysis was stronger than in most of the other proposals. Unlike the GGL case, this controversial proposal was not the one that ultimately failed. In fact, the project that later had to be closed was very highly rated because it was well written, demonstrated that the researcher had read and absorbed the background paper, and focused closely on the decentralization issue – although, like most of the proposals, it was weak on gender analysis. In fact, according to the lead project officer, “across the board, the projects were lacking in strong gender analysis.” (I-2)

In South Asia, 40 proposals were received and their quality was better, though also variable; those involved expressed differing opinions: that most of the proposals were “of excellent quality;” (I-6) that they were “average or high-average;” (I-1) and finally, that the jury was “not spoiled for choice” and many of the proposals were “very poor.” (I-7) In terms of regional representation, the response was satisfactory, though not ideal, with 65% of proposals received coming from India.⁴ One disappointment in the SA-D process was that no sufficiently strong proposal was received from Bangladesh, but it was possible to select one proposal each from Pakistan and Nepal.

In LAC-D, there was consensus on the generally good quality of proposals received. A disappointment here was that only one proposal was received from the Caribbean – from Cuba, and none at all from the English-speaking Caribbean. Nevertheless, given language and other contextual differences, a winning project from the English-speaking Caribbean might have unduly complicated monitoring and networking aspects of the competition. As FLACSO-Argentina's first technical report pointed out, “traditionally this sub-region has very little communication and weak links with Spanish-speaking countries throughout the region.” While the competition could have helped strengthen such linkages, it might make more sense to consider the Caribbean as a separate region and plan from the beginning to capitalize on commonalities among the Spanish-speaking countries. With this exception, proposals received were representative of the region as whole, making it possible to select a good mix of countries.

"I want to highlight the transparency of the competition, because it's not common in Latin America." (I-3)

The SA-D competition generated the smallest number of applications – fewer than expected – and the lead project officer looked into the reason. She concluded that

⁴ WRC, *SA Proposals Received (Excel document)*.

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our competition guidelines and expectation of quality (...for instance, we said in the call that we are interested in supporting research on second generation questions only) meant that only those who were in the thick of this debate contributed proposals. We asked for a 20-page proposal with a lot of information including a good review of literature, policy implications, etc., which demanded a lot of investment in the proposal writing process. Many researchers did not want to invest so much time and energy in a process where outcome was not certain. (I-6)

The fact that the CFPs that generated the most proposals (GGL and SSA-D) also generated poorer quality ones suggests that the important thing is to write and target the CFP well. The South Asia CFP apparently acted as a screening mechanism, and dissemination of the CFP in both South Asia and Latin America seems to have been done very thoroughly.

In terms of criteria and selection, the GGL and SSA-D experiences, in particular, suggest that problems with projects evident at the selection stage are likely to remain and that awardees are unlikely to modify projects significantly once they have been chosen—in contrast to what may happen in collaborative project development in non-competition situations. In two cases, concerns identified by project officers from the start led to the termination of projects.

All of these issues together point to the value of considering a two-step selection process, as several project officers suggested during the evaluation. In a two-step process, initial expressions of interest would be solicited by the call for proposals, and a smaller number sent back for full proposals. Such a mechanism should help strike a balance between quality and quantity of selection: it should generate more expressions of interest initially by overcoming researchers' reluctance to invest a lot of time and energy in an uncertain process, and make it easier and faster to weed out poorer quality or off-target proposals at the first stage, and allow project officers to provide at least some input in the proposal development stage for the short listed group. Some funding might be provided to those selected to develop full proposals. A drawback here is that a two-step process makes it harder to disappoint those ultimately refused grants, but the hope would be that such applicants would be somewhat compensated by having a strong proposal ready to present to other funders.

Awardee profiles

The profiles of project leaders, teams, and host institutions varied, but all had significant academic credentials (many holding doctorates or working on doctorates, and most of the rest holding master's degrees or other specialized credentials), along with some combination of research, consulting, activist, or field experience. However, there were differences in emphasis, with some having a stronger academic track record, some a stronger policy-related record, and some being more closely tied to grassroots or activist organizations. Host institutions varied along similar lines, ranging from universities, to independent research centres, to NGOs.

In GGL, all the projects were led by women, all of whom either held or were nearing completion of PhDs. Their disciplinary backgrounds varied, including geography, law, sociology, agricultural extensions, and anthropology, and their collaborators also had varied academic backgrounds. All the project leaders had published or carried out research and consulting related to gender and development issues, reflecting the fact that the GGL call asked for researchers with "a track record in gender-focussed research"—which the decentralization competitions did not. GGL project leaders' grassroots links varied: the Brazilian researcher had

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worked for many years at the grassroots level, while others had done more policy work. With the exception of the Brazilian project, which was hosted by a social movement organization, all the others were hosted by universities or research NGOs.

The profiles of awardees in the decentralization competitions were roughly similar to those in GGL, although there were some interesting variations amongst the three regional competitions. The profile of researchers in the SSA-D projects was more traditionally academic than in the other two regional competitions, with all project leaders holding PhDs, and three of the four completed projects hosted in universities. In the SA and LAC competitions, several of the key researchers did not hold PhDs; and not all had strong backgrounds in formal research. Moreover, none of the South Asian or Latin American host institutions were universities – most were hosted by independent research centres or NGOs. Some of these were primarily dedicated to research and teaching, such as the Centre for Development Studies in Kerala and others primarily to practice, such as FUNDES in El Salvador or UNNATI in Rajasthan. Like the GGL competition, the CFP attracted researchers with a range of disciplinary backgrounds – urban planning, agricultural economics, political science, irrigation engineering, sociology, history, medicine, anthropology – and most of the teams were multidisciplinary.

Unlike in GGL, the decentralization CFPs did not ask for a background in gender-focused research, specifying only that “[t]he competition is aimed at experienced researchers, who may choose to work in teams with women’s rights organizations and/or with less experienced colleagues.” Many of the SSA-D proposals came from researchers without a strong track record in gender research, and were generally weak on gender analysis (I-2). In the SA and LAC cases the gender track record of applicants also varied, though in the end most of the project coordinators or key researchers had at least some background on gender and women’s rights. Two notable exceptions were the Ghana project, which was eventually terminated, and the Bolivia project, which was advised by FLACSO-Argentina to work with a gender consultant.

Thus, while capacity building was not a key objective in these competitions, there was evidently a willingness to work with researchers who lacked a strong gender background, and researchers with somewhat less overall research experience. In addition, since these competitions – especially the decentralization series – were aimed at “research for change” and emphasized both action and policy impact, the capacity of awardees in this area is relevant. They varied on this count – some being well placed to promote policy lessons or engage in activities related to the research findings, and others less so. A lesson in this regard is that if researchers without a background in a key area of research, with less research experience overall, or less experienced or well-placed in terms of policy, action, and dissemination objectives are going to be selected, capacity building to address these gaps should be integrated into the competition cycle. In the SSA-D case, for example, some projects were weak on either or even *both* of the two key competition themes of gender and decentralization – a fact which was reflected in some of the research results, and particularly in the quality of analysis.

Drawing hard and fast conclusions from this sample about links between the relationship between formal credentials, institutional housing, and project success is difficult since no strong correlations emerge. What can be said is that the competitions with a higher concentration of PhD-level researchers did not produce better results than those including more varied credentials. Considering the importance of policy results and the interest in action research in

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WRC, seeking more varied profiles makes sense. The diversity of profiles does make the monitoring task more complex, though, since it means awardees are likely to have strengths and weaknesses in different areas. Capitalizing on these differences through networking and exchange mechanisms that draw on different awardees' particular strengths to help build capacity in others would be one way to make the most of such diversity. Some such efforts occurred in these competitions, but they could be made more systematic.

E. Program Administration

Grant size and timelines

The GGL competition included five projects: from Brazil (Amazonia), Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, and Vietnam, with grants ranging from \$82,053 to \$100,000 CAD. Their planned durations varied between 18 and 24 months. The Ghana project was officially terminated in November 2006 due to institutional, reporting, and financial irregularities.

The decentralization competitions granted awards ranging between \$92,000 and \$121,475 CAD, and also ranged in duration between 18 and 24 months. In the decentralization competitions, it was originally intended that five projects would be funded in each case. In SSA-D, one project had to be closed, leaving just four—in Bénin, Nigeria, South Africa, and Sudan. In SA-D, there were five—three in India, and one each in Nepal and Pakistan. In LAC-D, it was decided that research costs were higher and the grant ceiling had to be raised from \$100,000 to \$120,000, which meant that only four grants were awarded—in El Salvador/Honduras, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Given that one of the benefits of the competitive modality is the opportunity for networking, comparative analysis, and shared policy conclusions and impact, it is unfortunate that only four projects could be funded in this region. Some of these projects were also very broad in scope; it might have been more profitable to have five slightly less ambitious than four larger ones, and trade-offs of this kind should be considered in future competitions.

The evaluation did not turn up any major financial issues—with the exception of the problems surrounding the terminated GGL project in Kenya. Several awardees noted that they felt the budgets they

had requested were not, ultimately, large enough to accommodate their proposed projects. Few reported serious problems with the level of funding, but the costs of travelling to remote research locations, and the costs of translation were two issues that came up several times. Of course, applicants are responsible for ensuring their budgets match proposed activities, but this area is also one in which IDRC might work more with awardees, especially since not all have previous experience in developing large projects. Grants administration staff do review project budgets—although in the LAC-D case they did not, since this role was not outlined for them in the TORs. The two-step application process mentioned above might help ensure budgets are as realistic as possible by providing an opportunity for more consultation with IDRC on budgets.

"The timeline and the budget were off, and this problem was my responsibility. [...] I did not properly calculate the cost of doing four cases, two of them quite far away." (L-3)

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In one project, researchers successfully argued for child-care expenses from the host institution (outside the IDRC-funded budget) to facilitate work for the all-female team, leading to the suggestion that if WRC wants to promote a feminist research agenda, such expenses might be considered as part of IDRC funding.

In GGL, there were long delays in completing almost all the projects—up to one or two years beyond the planned finish. In SSA-D, the three 18-month projects were extended by at least three months; only the two-year South Africa project was completed on time. In SA-D, three of the four projects were for two years. Official extensions have not been granted at time of writing, and although all the awardees reported feeling pressed for time and hoped for short extensions, they also reflected the view that the timelines was “more or less fine.” (S-1) In the LAC-D competition, three projects had an 18-month duration—finish dates of February 2008—and one had a 21-month duration—finish date of June 2008. All requested extensions and none were complete at time of writing (May 2008).

There were various reasons for delays, among them illness and other personal issues, researchers’ over-commitment (including in some cases their involvement in political campaigns), slow start-up due to problems attaining legal country clearances (as in the Sudan SSA-D case) or in getting requested budget revisions or documentation required prior to signing MGCs, elections or other political phenomena in research areas, and bad weather impeding access to research areas. The Vietnam GGL project was delayed by the Avian flu outbreak, and in the Paraguay LAC-D project, half the research team, which included medical doctors and public health specialists, were occupied by an outbreak of Yellow Fever. In the final phases of almost all the SA-D and LAC-D projects, researchers commented on the enormous time and effort required to analyze the abundance of data they collected.

“Realistically, research is a long and time-consuming process. And balancing teaching with research is hard. Also, one of our research sites was [...] far from where we are [...] and the roads become impassable in the rainy season. One always tends to underestimate how long research will take. You tend to do these perfect timetables, and they look possible, but all of us work full time and although this [project] augments our work, it’s difficult.” (G-1)

There is a tacit understanding amongst IDRC officers that projects are likely to face delays and that short extensions and slightly overdue final reports are not a cause for concern. In a competition, timeline issues need to be taken seriously since reaping the benefits of the competition in terms of exchange of ideas amongst awardees, shared policy conclusions, and networking, requires that the projects be on relatively similar schedules, facing similar issues at roughly the same time, being ready with preliminary and final data and analysis at roughly the same time, being ready to produce final reports and policy recommendations and discuss findings together at the same time. For this purpose ensuring the projects are of the same duration, have similar levels of complexity, etc. is important.

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Given the number of variables that affect research—especially in the locations where these projects take place—the complexity of the research and theoretical reflection sought, the fact that these competitions involved research teams, which are inevitably somewhat complex to manage; that they encouraged partnership with other organizations; and that action and policy objectives were given priority, common sense and the experience suggest that 24 months is a more realistic time frame than 18. If any kind of networking and exchange activities are added to the mix—as was the case fairly intensively in LAC-D and, to a lesser extent in SA-D, the longer timeframe seems even more necessary. Some delays cannot be predicted, but this sample suggests that some unforeseen delays are almost certain to occur. Moreover, some delays can be predicted: the rainy season happens every year and will always make access to remote areas difficult, and elections are normally called in advance. Researchers should be encouraged to take such risks into account in their planning and reflect them in their proposals in order to make timelines as realistic as possible. Alerting applicants at the outset to the documents they will eventually need to provide if they are selected might help speed the start-up; again, doing so might be more feasible in a two-step process.

Administratively, the projects went fairly smoothly. There were occasionally some issues on the awardees' side such as bottlenecks in host institutions. In a couple of cases, problems arose in larger host institutions whose accounting departments were separate from the projects themselves, making it difficult for project leaders to get access to financial information and, sometimes, resources in a timely manner. Some awardees reported that they found it difficult not to have direct control over accounting in the project. These problems are external to IDRC, but IDRC might be able to ease them by ensuring that they communicate directly with host institutions' accounting staff near the beginning of projects, and by suggesting mechanisms that could overcome these issues.

Most of the competitions involved research teams, often multi-disciplinary, and sometimes including personnel from more than one institution. In some cases, project coordinators were distinct from key researchers. Occasional problems arose within projects in terms of coordinating the teams, especially those involving two institutions, researchers contracted outside the host institutions, and researchers with multiple responsibilities beyond the projects. There is little IDRC can do about such internal issues, but attempts should be made in reviewing projects to ensure there is commitment from all those to be involved. Again, a two-step selection process might offer more scope for attending to such details. Contracting with one host institution and a designated project leader, as the MGCs in these competitions did, at least ensures clear lines of responsibility are established. One awardee reported that they purposefully—and very successfully—structured their team in a non-hierarchical manner, which was an innovation within the host institution. She felt this experiment alone was an important contribution.

In the failed GGL Kenya project, concerns about the research project itself were augmented by concerns over budget reporting. After salary overruns were noted, it emerged that award funds had been improperly used to cover overhead and administrative costs in the host organization. The root of this problem was the instability of the host organization, which, by the time the project was underway, was without core funding from any other source. In the failed SSA-D Ghana project, there were extreme delays in reporting responding to requests for clarification.

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Eventually, it became nearly impossible for the project officer or the WRC director to reach the lead researcher.

On the IDRC side, competition administration and management was affected by staffing issues such as the small size of the GU—which meant that there was often just one project officer responsible for most of the competition projects—and staff fluctuations due to departures and leaves. In fact, as noted above, the choice of the competition modality itself reflected GU staffing concerns, since it was believed that a competition would require less intensive monitoring and project development activity, and thus could be managed by the few staff available. In reality, the centre-administered portions of the projects absorbed a great deal of time. In general, the idea that competitions require less staff time and effort is not borne out by experience. This point also emerges from a previous small grants review, which found that contrary to what is sometimes supposed, “small grants are not inherently self-sustaining” and “a grants Program is effective to the extent it is not left to ‘happen,’ without specific systems and resources in place to push it along.”⁵

F. Outsourcing management of the LAC-D competition

An important innovation in the LAC-D competition was “outsourcing” management to a host institution—FLACSO-Argentina. Such an arrangement had been considered for the South Asia competition, but was rejected due to WRC team concerns about “losing learning space by contracting out; about losing space for intellectual and methodological direction...” (I-3) This evaluation indicates that overall FLACSO-Argentina’s management of the competition has been satisfactory, and that the arrangement produced positive results on a number of levels. There were some rough spots in the process, but given the novelty of the arrangement for both parties these were to be expected. Nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned as well as reason to ponder whether this experiment is one worth replicating.

“We felt there could be a gain in having a different institution take it on—the idea that it might lead to more local ownership, and this could decrease workload on the front end.” (I-2)

The TORs for the contracted organization were developed by IDRC’s regional director for Latin America, the GU’s interim director, and a PDA contracted specifically to work on getting the arrangement underway. The PDA identified five potential host institutions that were subsequently invited to submit proposals. Of these, four submitted proposals, and two were seriously considered. Because the process was new to IDRC, great care was taken in the selection process to try to minimize the risks involved. In the end, the choice ended up being between an organization with a stronger academic profile (FLACSO) and previous experience working with IDRC, and another candidate with more experience and contacts related to the competition theme and a more activist profile. Another factor was that the FLACSO budget was

⁵ Bernard, p 2-3.

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considered to be more realistic. An MGC was signed with FLACSO, and work on the competition got underway immediately. The entire selection process took approximately seven months.

FLACSO-Argentina is the Argentinean member of the FLACSO network—the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty—created by UNESCO in 1957 to promote and support academic research and study in the social sciences in the region. FLACSO-Argentina’s primary activity is offering a variety of post-secondary degrees and courses, including through on-line courses. Within FLACSO-Argentina, management of the competition was the responsibility of PRIGEPP (the Regional Training Program on Gender and Public Policy).

A WRC Professional Development Awardee (PDA) based in Montevideo worked full time on the file during the selection process and in the early stages of the competition itself, collaborating closely with the FLACSO-Argentina team and providing close monitoring. The PDA spent considerable time at the FLACSO offices, and his presence and contribution was crucial to the successful launch of the arrangement between IDRC and FLACSO.

The primary objective of the outsourcing arrangement identified by the WRC team was to cut down on workload. A secondary objective was to build the capacity of the contracted organization. Here the idea was to “select a relatively strong organization but to build their capacity in an area that is relatively new to them at the same time.” However, this capacity-building objective took a backseat to workload issues in the minds of WRC team members, who generally saw the experiment—at least initially—as a response to the “growing workload of the project officers” (I-4)

“...previous competitions have caused very high workloads...[and...f]or that reason, IDRC's GU has decided to outsource the competition's administration to an organisation in Latin America and the Caribbean. This will enable IDRC's GU staff to monitor the competition without workloads becoming unmanageable.” (LAC-D PAD)

The arrangement with FLACSO-Argentina also responded to discussions within the Centre about whether IDRC might work with partners in “high-capacity” countries to develop their roles as IDRC-type intermediaries. Although this perspective did not seem to find much of an echo within the team at the beginning of the process, as the competition cycle was drawing to a close, one project officer reflected: “now I see the merit of this view.” (I-3) Nevertheless, capacity-related objectives for FLACSO-Argentina were not reflected in the relevant documents, such as the PAD. Nor was capacity building mentioned in the MGC, except insofar as FLACSO may be considered part of the “community of practice” the competition intended to strengthen.

WRC team members frequently referred to the arrangement in terms of “outsourcing” or “contracting out.” However, members of the FLACSO-Argentina team described the arrangement in terms of “partnership” and joint management. The different vocabulary suggests subtle but important differences in understandings of roles and responsibilities. At other times, it seemed IDRC had more substantive expectations for FLACSO than were communicated in the TORs.

“We have been working very closely with IDRC, and expect to continue to work closely with IDRC in all the aspects [of the competition]. We feel that this approach of working together, in partnership, is very important. IDRC is not just a funding organization, but works in this way, in partnership.” (L-1)

One WRC team member described the relationship between IDRC, FLACSO-Argentina, and the individual LAC-D projects as parallel to that between IDRC, a research project leader, and project case studies. Such a parallel implies heavy and independent involvement by FLACSO-Argentina in collating and engaging in analysis of project findings, a role not fully reflected in the TORs. Over time, though, FLACSO-Argentina did begin to take on this kind of role—as demonstrated, for example, in the summary of preliminary findings from the four projects in FLACSO’s second technical report.

This evaluation suggests that the arrangement with FLACSO-Argentina produced limited results in terms of easing WRC workload. Taking into account the time and resources for recruiting and selecting FLACSO-Argentina, initiating the relationship, taking part in initial competition activities such as producing the CFP, short listing, and selecting awardees, in monitoring both FLACSO-Argentina and, indirectly, the winning projects, it is questionable whether WRC made gains in time and resources. For example, the lead project officer in WRC accompanied the FLACSO project officer on two of her monitoring trips. Such accompaniment was necessary to the development of the relationship with FLACSO-Argentina, for monitoring FLACSO’s own monitoring, and in order to allow WRC to gain more direct insights on the projects themselves, but makes little sense from an efficiency point of view. In some respects, rather than making competition management more efficient, the arrangement with FLACSO simply added another layer of complexity to IDRC’s role. Moreover, there are costs to IDRC, in being more distant from the individual projects and thus sacrificing some opportunities to give details input on the projects.

Nevertheless, the LAC-D competition involved more intensive monitoring and networking activities than the other competitions—especially than the SSA-D competition, and FLACSO-Argentina brought additional value through its contacts in the region, which may have led to a better CFP distribution process and improved competition outcomes overall. In addition, the arrangement has increased capacity in FLACSO-Argentina, both substantively on the women’s rights and decentralization theme, and also in terms of funding and project management experience. For example, PRIGEPP has created a new graduate seminar in women and local governance. FLACSO-Argentina’s involvement with the competition series and engagement in the thematic area will likely produce longer-term gains in terms of promoting this research agenda and expanding its policy influence.

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Administratively, there were some initial worries about differences in administrative and financial practices between FLACSO-Argentina and IDRC. At IDRC, GAD (Grants and Administration) was not consulted in the early stages, nor included in the selection of FLACSO-Argentina, which was a cause of concern since the process was relatively new to IDRC and quite complex administratively. To reduce risk on the administrative side, GAD staff should be consulted and involved early. In terms of finances, the project leader in FLACSO-Argentina felt the budget agreed was insufficient—something she classified as “an error on our part.” Early involvement from GAD might also have helped avoid this problem.

Contracted organizations need to be clear about IDRC administrative requirements. In the LAC-D case, for example, some minor confusion was caused by the fact that FLACSO-Argentina’s contracts with awardees did not include all the same information on reporting milestones as IDRC’s do. A similar issue arose with respect to the need to put in writing a change proposed by FLACSO-Argentina in one of the LAC-D projects. Although these situations did not lead to serious problems, they do suggest the need for more clarity over roles and responsibilities—who makes the final decision in such a case, and whose administrative practices prevail?

“Sharing like this, and decentralizing to an academic institution like FLACSO that has recognition and an important network in Latin America, seems great to me, because it’s also a way to expand the agenda—I mean, many more actors are now involved with the same commitment and the same question...” (L-2)

Reporting by FLACSO-Argentina to IDRC improved over time, with the lead project officer noting satisfaction with the second annual report, which provided more detail than the first and engaged directly with the substantive issues in the research projects. Communication between IDRC and FLACSO-Argentina was also good, maintained through e-mail, phone calls, electronic conferences, and during the two monitoring visits to projects mentioned above.

Overall, awardees were happy with FLACSO’s project administration, one project leader describing it as extremely efficient and even “exemplary” (L-3). Others noted that there had been “no problems,” (L-5) that administrative queries generally received a “quick response,” (L-6) and that the administrative officer “has been very open and we’ve had a very good relationship.” (L-4)

For the future, WRC—and other IDRC programs contemplating similar outsourcing arrangements—need to begin with a very thorough analysis of their objectives. While the arrangement was generally successful, there was a lack of clarity about what exactly was to be gained from it. This lack of clarity partly explained some of the challenges and tensions that arose. If the primary objective is to reduce workload within the Centre, this objective needs to be made clear to the host institution who will then expect less support from IDRC, and will need to have responsibilities exhaustively detailed. Moreover, if workload reduction is the overriding objective, then IDRC has to be more prepared to be less closely involved and accept the risks and diminished access to projects entailed.

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In reality, it seems fairly unlikely that IDRC would feel comfortable delegating its role so completely to another organization. If the emphasis is therefore on capacity-building or other objectives such as expanding networks and furthering a policy agenda, IDRC needs to be prepared to devote considerable resources to the effort. The process in LAC-D was relatively iterative and open-ended, with substantial flexibility on all sides, leading to a reasonable balance between efficiency and other gains. But greater clarity within IDRC on the nature of the arrangement, and more detail in communicating it to the host institution, would help prevent some problems and make it easier to achieve the various objectives more fully. Another possibility would be simply to contract out certain merely logistical elements of the competition cycle, such as workshop organization, or CFP distribution. (Further comments on specific aspects of FLACSO-Argentina's management of the LAC-D competition appear in other relevant sections of this report.)

G. Communications and Monitoring

Communications and general support

IDRC staff (or FLACSO-Argentina staff in the LAC-D case) kept in touch with researchers in all competitions via email and, to a lesser extent, telephone calls. Visits were another—very important—form of communication and monitoring, but two of the five projects in each of the GGL and SSA-D competitions did not receive any visits due to budget and time constraints. In the SA and LAC decentralization competitions, all projects received visits—from the IDRC project officer, in the South Asia case, and from FLACSO-Argentina staff accompanied in two cases by the lead IDRC project officer for LAC-D.

"[T]he WRC attitude is very good; in that sense, they are very special. One never felt coerced, it was always facilitative, supportive, and collegial. And that allowed us to discuss things and be very open and honest. It was fantastic." (G-1)

In the GGL and SSA-D cases, the lead project officer felt the lack of visits to some of the projects hindered monitoring, and all awardees in all the competitions emphasized the importance and utility of visits. One project officer noted that in addition to monitoring progress and providing assistance if needed, she uses visits "to bring a comparative perspective to the individual projects" (I-6). In LAC-D, one of the awardees called the visits "super useful" and said that "the most systematic comments that we've had came in [the FLACSO project officer's] visit." (L-3)

In general, awardees felt satisfied that they could contact and get responses from IDRC—or FLACSO-Argentina—when needed. Awardees reflected especially positively on the tone of relationships with WRC. Comments by awardees in the LAC-D competition also suggested that the style adopted by the lead project officer from FLACSO was consistent with the IDRC approach.

At times, the perspective of project officers differed from that of awardees. In one of the SSA-D projects, the awardee stated "sometimes we would be without email access for weeks. That

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affected our communicative relationship with IDRC a lot.” (D-1) The project officer, meanwhile, felt that while “there was no open conflict,” the project leader did not respond to her suggestions and advice and the communication gaps reflected substantive rather than technical problems. (I-1). FLACSO-Argentina staff also had some initial difficulty

“They (FLACSO-Argentina) have respected our autonomy and kept their distance; you don’t feel the pressure that you sometimes feel from big organizations with decision making power. For us, they’ve had a balanced and satisfactory role. When we need them, they’re there, but they’ve also let us work. When questions, doubts, or administrative issues come up, they’re there.” (L-5)

establishing communication with one of their projects. Serious communication problems were symptomatic of deeper problems in the two projects that eventually had to be closed—Kenya GGL and Ghana SSA-D. Email and phone calls were not returned, there were long delays in submitting reports, and failures or delays in responding to report feedback and requests for information. However, these cases were exceptions and overall communication seems to have been almost unusually positive in the competitions.

Although building capacity was not an explicit objective of these competitions, there was a general expectation that various kinds of support would be offered to researchers during the projects. Awardees’ expectations in this regard varied considerably. One mentioned items ranging from “access to the IDRC library,” to “possibilities for exchange...with others doing similar research,” and “professional assistance, especially on methodology.” (S-2). Another mentioned the importance of assistance from IDRC and FLASCO on methodology, as well as “the creation of spaces for general information exchange.” (L-5) These expectations were met to varying degrees through visits, meetings, electronic fora, and other monitoring.

Some SA-D awardees appreciated access to resources and journal databases—and with the help of a student intern, an annotated bibliography was created for the SA-D competition. Many also noted that they had not requested or needed additional support. Others, however, noted that they would have appreciated receiving more materials—such as new articles relevant to the competition themes. One awardee in LAC-D noted that despite an initial exchange of email with the librarian at IDRC in Ottawa, the relationship did not develop, and that though they had access to the library database, “for various reasons we did not take advantage of it—perhaps because of lack of familiarity with the system, lack of patience, lack of time.” (L-5) On the one hand, awardees clearly need to take responsibility for making the most of the resources available to them, following up on contacts, and asking for assistance when they need or want it. On the other hand, it might be helpful to clarify at the start exactly what is available and how awardees should go about getting assistance. A more formal introduction on how to use the IDRC database—or perhaps midterm follow-up to see whether it is being used or whether there are any problems—might help researchers take better advantage of such access.

Reporting

Formal reporting in these competitions followed IDRC’s “Guidelines for Preparing Interim Technical Reports” and “Guidelines for Preparing Final Technical Reports” and the reporting

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milestones set out in MGCs. Most awardees found the guidelines clear and the reporting requirements reasonable. One commented: “Things are very clear: this is what’s required at a certain point, and we can work towards that. It’s not particularly onerous or weird or unnecessary.” (D-3) Awardees also appreciated receiving feedback. According to one of the SSA-D researchers, the monitoring was “very good, very close, and[...we] liked it a lot.” (D-1)

“I think our interim report format needs some revisions. It is heavy on process questions and light on substantive aspects. Our partners invariably end up reporting in greater detail on the processes and miss the content. This has been my experience with the reports. The first reports were ‘thin’ but my monitoring visits confirmed good, interesting work happening so there was clearly a gap in what was reported and what was actually happening.” (I-6)

The view from the project officers was rather different. Although they found some reporting excellent, they were frequently less than satisfied—especially in the GGL and SSA-D competitions. The main GGL project officer noted that the global scope of that competition, combined with the small staff—and the many staffing changes over the life of the competition—made

monitoring “exceptionally difficult.” She felt that the competition had not been well thought through from the point of view of balancing its monitoring requirements with other staff work such as project development. (I-2) And because the quality of reports was not always good, monitoring consumed even more time, sometimes requiring repeated follow-up.

In the SSA-D competition, project officers found that reports lacked detailed accounts of data collection and an analytical perspective on it. The SA-D project officer had similar concerns with the first round of reports in that competition, and came to the conclusion that at least part of the problem lies in the reporting format. In the LAC-D case, FLACSO-Argentina officers seemed to focus less on the formal reports, although these were prepared and submitted, perhaps because awardees participated in a series of electronic fora and web conferences where they discussed progress. In addition, as in the SA-D competition, project visits were made to each location.

Because initial visits to the host institution are not built into the competition process, and because of the relatively short time frame, problems may not become apparent until well into the project schedule, by which time it may be too late to resolve them—a particular risk if close monitoring through projects visits, midterm meetings, and other mechanisms is not included in the competition cycle.

The conclusions are that, first of all, written reports alone are insufficient without visits and other forms of close project monitoring and, second, that to the extent project officers do want to see substantive project results reflected in the reports, the guidelines should be revised. It might also be helpful to ensure that reporting guidelines and expectations are discussed during competition inception workshops.

One other reporting issue has to do with awardees expectations about feedback. In the SA-D and LAC-D competitions, in which awardees generally reported being satisfied with

"We were expecting more comments. [...]. Before the second technical report we had the ... workshop, so maybe it was not necessary, but it would have been nice—and also maybe sharing people's reports from the other projects—and even getting critical comments on our report." (S-1)

communication and support from their project officers, a few did mention that they would have liked to have more formal feedback on the reports they submitted. While they also stated that they received helpful comments and support through visits, meetings, and other

mechanisms, there was a slight sense of being left hanging when reports were submitted and written responses were not forthcoming. In order to manage workload for project officers and expectations for awardees, it would be helpful to clarify in advance what kind of response awardees will receive.

Workshops and meetings

Although project visits were not always possible in GGL, face-to-face meetings partly made up for it. The competition cycle included an inception workshop, a panel at the International Sociological Association conference in Norway, and a publications workshop as the projects were nearing termination. These opportunities to meet IDRC staff and other researchers were valued by the GGL awardees and seemed to contribute to the quality of the projects and the competition overall.

The initial GGL workshop, held in Ottawa in September 2002, generated a sense of shared purpose amongst the competition awardees and permitted them to reflect deeply on their own and others' projects as well as on the concepts and methodologies they would use. After the workshop sessions, the awardees also had several days set aside to use IDRC's library facilities and work on final versions of their project proposals. The main objective of the workshop was to strengthen the projects, especially in terms of methodology, addressing a "perennial problem, which is that we get strong proposals in terms of the literature reviews, but the methodology section falls apart." It was also "a way to connect people and facilitate South-South exchange and networking." (I-3)

The workshop produced minimal results in terms of changes to the research proposals: "There were some *slight* changes to the proposals, but the proposals we had been worried about continued to be worrying to us." (I-2) This reality confirms that in a competition cycle, it is unwise to select weak projects, since major changes seem unlikely once they have been approved—even with an inception workshop specifically designed for the purpose.

While workshop impacts are difficult to attribute with certainty; researchers' and project officer comments and workshop reports indicate that the workshop—and follow-up contact among the awardees and with IDRC staff in subsequent meetings—contributed to reflective and rigorous approaches to methodology and strong commitment to the competition overall. The two project leaders interviewed reported that the workshop was useful because it helped them think through methodological and other issues, and connect with the other projects. The workshop report also gives evidence of intense and sophisticated discussion on how to conceptualize key

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themes for the competition, such as gender and land. These discussions, which continued in the publications workshop, helped the researchers conceptualize and write up their findings in ways that revealed thematic overlap and methodological learning.

As the GGL projects were concluding, another workshop was held to begin work on a joint publication. This workshop was also considered a success by the project officer and the awardees I interviewed: a chance to step away from other work and devote time to sustained thinking about the GGL themes and research findings.

An inception workshop was planned for SSA-D but it was cancelled due to scheduling problems that resulted from delays in starting up some of the projects. For the SSA-D researchers, therefore, the only meeting during the competition cycle was the Global Decentralization Workshop held in Buenos Aires in August 2006, by which time their projects were concluding. Moreover, visa problems (and project breakdown in the Ghana case) meant only two of the five African projects were represented. Although the workshop was, overall, useful, the SSA-D participants probably got much less out of it than their South Asia and Latin

America counterparts. About a year and a half after most of the projects were completed, a workshop in Senegal brought together the SSA-D awardees again to discuss their findings amongst themselves and with other experts, though once again, unfortunately, not all awardees were present since

"I think [a workshop] would have been a valuable addition, in order to pick up the experiences of other countries in the region, to find out how others were doing the research. It could have enhanced the project." (D-5)

the Nigerian researcher did not accept the invitation to attend.

The cancellation of the SSA-D inception workshop meant an opportunity was lost to generate some of the benefits that the GGL competition participants enjoyed: the minimal conditions for networking; a sense of engagement in a joint enterprise; at least one opportunity, at the outset, for rigorous engagement on methodological and conceptual issues; and setting the stage for more conceptual and theoretical overlap amongst the projects. An inception workshop might have improved some of the SSA-D projects through direct feedback on proposals and guided reflection on the gender and decentralization themes, which might have ameliorated the lack of analytical depth evident in one or two of these projects. Such benefits were reported from the Buenos Aires workshop for projects in other regions. When asked, the four SSA-D researchers I interviewed said they thought a workshop would have been helpful. One said: " (D-5) Another would have valued the chance to "link up with all the other groups...fluff out the issues, see how the other groups were looking at them." (D-3)

The global workshop on women's rights and decentralization held over four days in Buenos Aires in August, 2006, served as an inception workshop for the SA-D and LAC-D competitions and—more or less—as a closing event for SSA-D. Representatives from all the decentralization projects were invited, along with experts in gender and decentralization and relevant donor agency officials; however, due to visa problems, only two of the four African projects were

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represented. The overall objective was to bring together the grant recipients from all three competitions in order to foster South-South knowledge exchanges and the creation of an informal network on gender and decentralization. More specifically, the workshop aimed to presentation research findings from SSA and generate comparative analysis among the SSA awardees, present proposals and sharpen questions and methodology from the SA and LAC projects, identify research gaps and policy windows, and discuss ‘next steps’ strategies for the competition series.⁶

FLACSO-Argentina was responsible for organizing the workshop. There was some concern in the WRC team over how this worked out, and FLACSO also expressed dissatisfaction. There were differences in understanding over workshop objectives, as well as over who was in charge of various tasks. The result was some unfortunate tension, as well as logistical, content, and format challenges in the workshop itself. More specific and detailed TORs—clearly expressing substantive expectations and delineating roles—might have prevented this difficulty.

According to evaluation forms provided by FLACSO, participants were satisfied with the workshop; however, some

awardees did have critical comments. One, for instance, found that the workshop did not do enough to frame the research through in-depth discussions of the key concepts of women’s rights, citizenship, and decentralization. Others commented that more interactive presentation formats would have been helpful, and that they would have appreciated receiving materials in advance.

Nevertheless, awardees were generally enthusiastic about having a chance to meet other researchers, discuss the competition themes, and learn about each others’ projects. The level of engagement with conceptual and methodological issues was good, and interventions by invited experts were valuable. As the final workshop report noted, “a common and relevant thread that emerged during the workshop was the need to identify global policy themes and how to establish the links between researchers, policy makers, donors and advocacy groups.”⁷ From a regional perspective, the workshop was interesting for the African awardees who attended, but not especially productive; it was a case of “too little too late” and, in addition, it was hard to achieve regional networking or “next steps” objectives in the absence of half the awardees from the region. The workshop was more useful for the SA and LAC awardees, for whom it was a first chance to gain a stronger sense of the overall objectives of the competition, hear findings from the two SSA project, and start a joint process of refining conceptual and

"In future, documents could be presented in advance, and more than oral presentations, priority could be given to discussions based on having read the documents... It's not a criticism, because we've all worked this way, but we were thinking about how to enrich opportunities for exchange." (L-3)

⁶ Agenda, Women’s Rights and Decentralization Global Workshop.

⁷ WRC, *Final Report on the International Workshop on Decentralization and Women’s Rights, Buenos Aires, August 27-31 2006*, page 19.

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methodological approaches. During the regional breakout groups the SA project officer felt much was accomplished in terms of “sharpening the research questions.”⁸

Many of the awardees and project officers came away from the Buenos Aires workshop excited about maintaining contact and building networks, not only within but also across regions, yet little action followed. Some mildly successful networking efforts were built into the SA and LAC competitions, but none at all across regions to date. Putting follow-up mechanisms for networking and exchange in place prior to such a workshop, and tying them more directly to tangible results and products, might make it easier to fulfill expectations created and capitalize on this kind of energy to help advance competition (or in this case, competition series) goals, especially with regard to policy influence and promoting the research agenda.

In the SA-D competition, a workshop was organized in Delhi at the approximate midterm of the projects. This workshop was extremely useful to the lead project officer as a monitoring opportunity and a chance to provide detailed input on the projects at a crucial stage, with a substantive effect on the data collection process in at least one of the projects. Awardees also reported that they found the workshop very helpful for reflecting on their methodologies, engaging in conceptual discussion, and gauging their progress, approaches and interim findings against those of other teams. One awardee also commented that “a concrete gain for me was to understand that IDRC is very serious about the competition, about pursuing the whole decentralization thing, for example forming national level groups on policy. We’d really like to move from there, if IDRC does take that kind of initiative, we’d definitely like to be involved.” (S-1)

No midterm meeting was included in the LAC-D project cycle, but comments from awardees and the FLACSO-Argentina project leader, as well as the experience with the midterm workshop in SA-D, suggest such a workshop would have been extremely valuable. While the electronic fora and conferences allowed some exchange, awardees’ responses to these tools—as noted below—was lukewarm, and several mentioned how much they would have liked more opportunities for deeper discussion, including face-to-face meetings.

Although the TORs for the host institution in the LAC-D competition originally envisioned that one of the responsibilities of the contracted organization would be “to organize in coordination with IDRC a workshop for exchange of results among the selected institutions,” this plan was dropped from the competition PAD and the MGC with FLACSO-Argentina and it was left open what kind of dissemination strategy would be adopted, and whether FLACSO would be responsible. The idea was to wait until there was a better idea about the outputs of the competition—and prospects for a more comprehensive series-wide dissemination strategy—before proceeding with dissemination plans. The result was that the decision about a final workshop was not made until quite late in the competition cycle, and even after IDRC approved the workshop, the information was slow in getting to the awardees. Therefore, even as awardees were working on the final stages of their projects, they were unaware that there was going to be a face-to-face meeting to discuss results. Ideally, awardees would be informed

⁸ Minutes of WRC team workshop evaluation session, Montevideo, 1 September 2006.

well in advance of all components of the competition cycle, for their own scheduling and planning purposes, and to avoid frustration and maintain enthusiasm for the overall process.

Other networking and exchange experiences

The three decentralization competitions emphasized networking and information-exchange objectives to varying degrees, with the SSA-D competition paying least attention to these issues. In the SA-D and LAC-D cases, the networking and exchange objectives were specified more clearly but the success of efforts in this regard has been variable to date.

In the SA-D competition, an electronic mail group was created for the researchers to exchange information and resources and engage in discussion of their projects. Although there was some enthusiasm for this initiative when it was first mentioned to awardees at the Buenos Aires workshop, it never took off. Beyond this initiative, researchers from the various projects had opportunities to meet at the Buenos Aires workshop, and again at the workshop organized in Delhi. In addition, two of the projects had a joint inception workshop. They will meet again during a final workshop to share results and at the final global workshop in November 2008. SA-D awardees did not report much—if any—independent communication amongst themselves outside these meetings. As one said, “after [the Delhi] workshop, I wanted to be writing to other colleagues...but I haven’t found the time.” (S-3) Most researchers felt that exchange with other teams would be a good thing, but as this and other network-type experiences demonstrate, busy people need to see tangible benefits to engaging in such activity if they are going to put time and effort into it.

"There has been this e-group, but we don't really write. It was formed by IDRC and there have been some postings, mainly by IDRC, but it hasn't become a forum. It's not really necessary, not really linked to any of our project outputs.... But obviously, any sharing is useful. We shared some of our documents, as did [another researcher], but that's not happening. But it's something that if you have a larger agenda in mind, in terms of policy or action, then it would be useful. We are all part of so many e-groups, etc., that it's difficult." (S-1)

One limitation in terms of exchange amongst awardees is that sometimes different members of project teams participated in different meetings, which makes it difficult for personal relationships—recognized as the basis of successful networking—to develop. While it may be awkward for IDRC to interfere in awardees’ decisions about who to send to meetings, it is something that should be taken into account. The issue may be especially difficult to resolve when there are large research teams, when the research coordinator is not one of the key researchers, or when there are issues of seniority or hierarchy to contend with in the host institutions or within the teams themselves.

An innovation in the LAC-D competition managed by FLACSO-Argentina was a series of electronic fora (i.e. via written electronic messages, over a period of days) and conferences (by voice, in real time). These offered more intensive opportunities for exchange among awardees in this competition than in the others. These electronic mechanisms were useful to FLACSO for monitoring purposes, but their utility to the awardees themselves was variable. On the

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positive side, awardees were kept abreast of the progress of the other project—something that did not happen at all in the SSA-D competition, for example. Awardees also appreciated having opportunities for exchange and discussion on methodological and other issues, though in general, they found the real-time voice conferences more useful than the web fora. And, as one awardee commented: “I know it’s expensive, but there’s no substitute for visits. It’s my impression that discussion in the electronic fora doesn’t develop as much.” (L-3) One electronic event that most participants seemed to find successful was the forum held over three days in August 2007 (roughly midterm), in which projects were paired up to read and comment on each other’s reports.

The FLACSO-Argentina team noted that although there were some connectivity issues for some of the teams, these problems were resolved over time. According to their first report: “between the 1st and the 3rd conference, all researchers had improved their technological performance, their ability to convey the status of their projects, and also their methodological approach.” Interviews also confirmed that awardees became somewhat more positive in their assessment of the usefulness of these virtual communication tools over time. In this sense, exposure to such tools may be considered a capacity gain for awardees. Introducing awardees to this mechanism during the inception workshop in Buenos Aires—perhaps even with a trial run—might have assisted. In addition, an advance schedule of these electronic events would have helped participants prepare and plan for them better.

Despite the efforts to connect them via the electronic meetings, none of the awardees reported significant independent communication between their own and other projects. As in SA-D, the awardees expressed interest in connecting with other teams, but found that time and logistics worked against them. Both the awardees and the FLACSO-Argentina team expressed disappointment in this regard; again, the lesson here seems to be that despite interest, independent exchanges are unlikely to occur unless they are facilitated.

H. Research Results

GGL competition

With the exception of the terminated Kenya project, all of the projects in the GGL competition met both their own objectives and the competition’s overall objective of supporting “gender-focussed research on land tenure using an innovative methodology that explores links between the global and local context.” They generated new knowledge in the areas they studied, they made gains in their use of the concepts of land, gender and globalization, and all the researchers appear to have made progress in methodological learning.

Each project considered a local manifestation of globalization and linked it to a specific local issue or dynamic and its gender dimensions. Thus, the Cameroon project looked at whether and how the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline was reshaping gender relations in access to, use and control over resources (particularly land), governance structures, and livelihood in the affected communities; the Vietnam project explored how decollectivization affected gender relations and women’s empowerment; in Ghana, the focus was on gender dimensions of changes in mining

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and mangrove exploitation, linked to the impacts of environmental change and structural adjustment; and the Amazonia project considered how social movements in the sector of Brazil nut and babaçu kernel extraction are responding to increasing globalization of the market in nuts and vegetable oils. The Kenya project set out to explore how AIDS affected women's livelihoods as a result of land inheritance patterns.

The diversity of topics made it difficult to derive shared or comparative conclusions at the global level, but the project reports and comments from the lead project officer and others show that interesting links amongst the projects emerged, illuminating some of the many concrete ways that different forces linked to globalization can affect women's lives and livelihoods. Meanwhile, the individual projects successfully generated detailed empirical evidence. In addition, although policy influence was not a key stated objective, the projects did have local policy relevance. The degree of relevance and the actions taken to disseminate results varied. Both the Vietnam and Ghana projects offered insights relevant to ongoing land tenure reform processes, and the project teams in those countries made efforts to bring their findings to the attention of policymakers. And the Amazonia project, which utilized an "action research" approach, included engagement in collective action as part of the research process—for example, through the organization of cross-border meetings between groups of babaçu-breaker and Brazil-nut-peeler women from the different countries involved in the project, where they exchanged experiences dealing with alternative products and markets, and worked to establish partnerships, disseminate information, and lobby for policy change.

The lead GGL project officer, the two awardees interviewed, and the project and workshop reports all indicate that the researchers engaged conscientiously with the goal of methodological innovation. According to Dr. Allison Goebel, who acted as a resource person during the initial methodology workshop and the later publication workshop, "[a]ll teams had developed a much more deliberate and reflexive approach to their methodology than was evident in the original proposals, and the richness of the research findings was the gratifying result [...]" She further noted in her contribution to the workshop report: "I think there are possibilities of making contributions to the methodology literature itself, in addition to the literatures on gender, land tenure and globalization."⁹

While the GGL competition met its research and methodological objectives, significantly less was accomplished on the second competition objective stated in the PAD: modelling "gender-focussed research in ENRM." There is little evidence of efforts to disseminate process or results within IDRC, or through ongoing linkages between the projects and ENRM staff, and none of the project documents or interviews described an action plan related to this objective. At the outset, some ENRM Program officers were involved—for example, in the methodology workshop. In addition, according to one WRC staff member, some learning and exchange was facilitated by Fiona Mackenzie who collaborated with both ENRM and the GU. The major delays in completing the projects and their resulting different timelines presented an obstacle to achieving this objective. (I-3) The failure to fulfill this objective cannot be interpreted as a failure in the competition, since it reflected changes taking place in the GU during this period.

⁹ Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure Publication Workshop: Final Report, September 26-30, 2005 (page 18)
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Decentralization competitions

This series of regional competitions included a total of thirteen successful projects—four each in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, and five in South Asia. They aimed at generating empirical, policy-oriented research on the gender dimensions of state decentralization reforms. The competitions were intended to generate research leading to comparative conclusions both within and across regions; however, differences in regional context and research capacity meant there were differences in emphasis and approach from one region to another. Overall, the projects in SA-D and LAC-D tended to engage with the theme from a more critical theoretical perspective, and to go beyond questions about the extent of women's participation, access, and the impact of decentralization policies, to investigate more complex issues about the quality of such participation and access, and the gendered nature of women's agency in decentralized contexts. Having said that, there were some valuable and theoretically grounded research results in the SSA-D competition, and not all the SA-D and LAC-D projects, though solid and productive, went beyond straightforward assessments of the impact of decentralization reforms on women.

Very broadly speaking, and with exceptions, the results of the SSA-D competition were weaker than those in the other two regional competitions—both in terms of some of the individual projects and in terms of how the research findings from the component projects came together. This outcome is partly explained by the lack of opportunities for exchange amongst awardees during the competition cycle. As noted already, at time of writing, final reports have not yet been submitted in the SA-D and LAC-D competitions, but while there have been challenges in some of these projects, overall they seem set to meet their own and the competitions' objectives, producing valuable, policy-relevant results, advancing theoretical and strategic discussion on the intersection of women's rights and decentralization, and in some instances making valuable contributions to the partners and communities with whom research was conducted.

In SSA-D, the South Africa project most clearly and fully met its own and the competition's objectives, addressing the competition theme with a tightly focussed research question and plan that had clear policy relevance. The research methodology was sound and appropriate, the reports offer strong evidence of the data gathered, the analysis was coherent and well linked to the questions raised in the proposal and to the issues highlighted in the CFP and background paper, and there was a systematic effort to disseminate the results to achieve policy impact. South Africa's generally stronger institutional and research capacity, compared to many other countries in the region, as well as the country's strong legal and policy framework in decentralization, may go some distance to explaining the project's success. The fact that it was led by a seasoned academic may also be relevant, although weaker projects were also led by university-based researchers.

"The objectives that we mentioned in our project proposal ... clearly indicated our desire to generate a feminist understanding of decentralization in politics and development in Kerala. We hope to move beyond the familiar sort of 'impact study.'" Interim Technical Report, Kerala SA-D Project.

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More to the point is probably the fact that this researcher had a background in planning and had done considerable previous work on decentralization and local government—unlike any of the other researchers in this competition.

The initial series background paper, which was used to orient the SSA-D competition, identified the following overlapping points of entry for research: women's political participation at the local level; women's civil society participation at the local level; gender implications of intergovernmental relations and co-ordination in decentralized systems (including gender machineries); and women's access to services and resources in decentralized systems. In addition to political participation, gender machineries, and access to services and resources, the LAC-D background paper identified research dealing with accountability and women's claiming of rights as important areas of enquiry. The South Asia background paper took a slightly different approach by explicitly framing the research agenda in terms of action, calling for research that contributes to constructing the substantive representation of women; expands the scope and depth of participation of women as citizens in public decision-making; and contributes to building the accountability of state, political parties and social movements vis-à-vis gender equality outcomes at the local level.

Of the thirteen projects across the series funded to completion, seven focussed directly on local governance—through research on issues such as the level, quality, and impact of women's participation, locally, in arenas such as local government, political parties, local participatory mechanisms, civil society organizations and social movements. Meanwhile, six adopted sectoral entry points, investigating women's participation within decentralized sectoral spheres, and/or the impact of sectoral decentralization on women. Of these, two looked at multiple sectors (Nepal and Sudan), one focused on agriculture (Bénin), one on health (Paraguay), and two on the water sector (Bolivia and Gujarat/Maharashtra in India). The South Africa project looked specifically at decentralized planning mechanisms, considering the impact of national gender machineries on local outcomes. The El Salvador/Honduras project also focused on national and local gender machineries and how they interacted with women's organizations and municipal governments to promote gender equality and women's rights in local democracy.

There was, of course, overlap between these research topics. For example, the Gujarat/Maharashtra water project deal with governance issues, questioning the implications of decentralized water sector governance for women's empowerment. The Nepal project looked separately at the impact of decentralization on women's agency in education, forestry, and irrigation, in addition to studying local governance structures *per se*. The Paraguay health project, among other things, investigated women's participation in, and the impact on women's rights of, decentralized health management committees. And many of the governance projects asked questions about the tangible impacts of women's participation in terms of local development and service outcomes.

One challenge for some projects was maintaining the focus on the themes of women's rights and decentralization—a risk that seemed especially evident in some of the sectorally focussed projects. Sectoral entry points were within the terms set out by the CFP, and had the advantage of grounding potentially vague governance issues. As one of the awardees who worked on a sectoral project put it: "We feel that unless we address that, we might just be then looking at the structures around decentralization, without really questioning the content of the whole

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decentralization process.” (S-1) At the same time, addressing both decentralization and gender in depth, as well as doing justice to sectoral issues, was a large task.

In SSA-D, this problem was evident in the Bénin project. It set out to investigate, within a decentralized context, the best strategies for women attempting to improve agricultural management in flood plain areas of Bénin’s Collines department, with a view to developing an action plan to help women gain equitable access to natural resources. The references to the decentralization in the proposal were not well integrated with the other themes of agricultural extension, resource management, and gender (which itself was not well developed), and this problem remained throughout the reporting, although the final report contained somewhat more discussion of the decentralized system. In the LAC-D Bolivia project the decentralization issue seemed to be at risk of getting lost in a complex amalgam of themes, including cultural diversity, competing perspectives on gender, and the management of irrigation systems. However, the need to ensure that decentralization was integrated into findings and analysis was raised during at least one of the competition web fora and the researchers seemed set to successfully integrate the various elements, including decentralization, at the analysis stage. In both the Bénin and Bolivia projects, lead researchers had a more technical background (irrigation engineer and agricultural economics) and no team members with specific political science or public policy backgrounds, which may have increased the risk that the institutional and political dimensions of decentralization would be overlooked.

A related challenge in some projects was a tendency to collect local data without adequately exploring its relationship to the broader decentralized *system*. In the Nigeria project, for example, interviews and surveys explored attitudes to women’s political participation, and “constituency-building workshops” facilitated discussion of women’s political organizing and identities, but the project did not directly address differences between women’s participation locally and nationally, or ask whether the decentralized context presents specific, additional barriers, or in some way changes or facilitates women’s participation or effectiveness. As a result, although it helped fill the gap in local data on women’s participation, the project made less of a contribution to whether and how decentralization as political or administrative system is related to the promotion of women’s rights.

Some projects also seemed overly ambitious in scope—particularly when factors such as capacity building with partners, an action research orientation, and a focus on policy influence are taken into account. The

Bolivia project was generally acknowledged to be extremely—perhaps overly—large, examining eight case studies in depth, and wrestling with complex and contentious questions about the interaction between cultural diversity,

I think there should be stricter selection criteria for the projects. They seem too ambitious to me. You have to look at the relationship between time, objectives, and resources. (L-1)

concepts of water rights, and concepts of gender. The El Salvador/Honduras project also threatened to get out of hand in terms of the amount of data, the management of a two-country study, a team that was initially too small, and an uncertain balance between action and research

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in researchers with a strong activist orientation and an inclination to take advantage of as many advocacy opportunities as possible. For this project, close monitoring and reminders from the FLACSO-Argentina team to stick to the proposed research questions and plans helped keep things on track, though it is still too early to tell whether the final report will pull the various strands together in a coherent way.

The scope of the SA-D Kerala project also seemed enormous. It set out to address a number of interrelated, conceptually complex research questions about “women’s understandings and assessments of politics, gender, well-being and the possibilities opened up in and through political decentralization in the 1990s, and the hurdles that stand in the way of their full citizenship,” (Kerala project MGC). The methodology involved in-depth qualitative research with women in three settings: political society (e.g. in political parties, women’s wings, trade unions, etc.), women at the interface of politics and development (e.g. in state poverty-alleviation bureaucracies, NGOs, etc.), and women in oppositional civil society (e.g. the environmental movement, feminist movement, tribal movement, etc.). This work involved, among other things, an enormous number of interviews and the diversity of results made integrating and making sense of the information collected—especially given the sophisticated theoretical framework—a huge task. Nevertheless, project reports demonstrated that the research team was managing the challenge by engaging in ongoing review and analysis as data was amassed. Awardees in several projects noted strategies for managing the quantity of data, including ongoing analysis, preparation of interim analytical syntheses, and producing empirical case-study write-ups as data was collected. The Ecuador project was another one in which there was ample evidence of ongoing analysis and critical engagement with the key competition themes throughout the research process.

There was less evidence of ongoing analysis in the more problematic of the SSA-D projects. In two of them (Bénin and Nigeria) there were disjunctures among the quantity, quality, and analysis of data apparently collected. The Bénin project conducted field research in six municipalities, a total of 158 participants took part in municipal-level validation and feedback workshops, a departmental level workshop was held, and further, more intensive field work was carried out in two case study communities. In addition, 30 people participated in capacity-building workshops. However, the project reports give few details about the data collected through these activities and the analysis in the final report is fairly superficial and poorly integrated with any sophisticated concepts of gender or decentralization. It is hard to assess whether the weakness stems from a lack of analytical capacity, or a lack of useful data.

Nigeria project reports indicated an enormous amount of data collected in the twelve case study local authorities. This data, if organized and accessible, represents a valuable contribution to filling the gap in knowledge about the extent, nature, and quality of women’s participation in Nigerian local government. But while the second technical report refers to coding, transcribing, and summarizing survey, focus group, and interview results, there is no account of the data analysis in the final technical report and specific references to data in the final report and book manuscript are sketchy. Since the lead researcher in this project did not participate in either the Buenos Aires or Dakar workshops, there was no opportunity to engage with her personally to get a better sense of project results.

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In sum, the competitions generated a great deal of data relevant to women's rights in decentralized contexts. Some of the projects were more conceptually innovative than others, some were more successful in analyzing the data collected, some engaged in more action-oriented research, and some produced conclusions that were more policy-relevant; but all contributed to filling the gap in research and knowledge on the relationship between decentralization reforms and the fulfillment of women's rights in these regions. Taken together, they make a valuable contribution to advancing this research and action agenda.

I. Capacity Building

As noted above, building capacity for research was not a key objective of the competitions, which targetted senior researchers. A member of the WRC team explained: "We saw the research competitions as not having capacity building as their main goal. The idea is to have a diversified portfolio, with strong proposals that requires less capacity building and other support." (I-3) Nevertheless, capacity building of various kinds did take place, some directly with lead and junior researchers, and some indirectly with project partners and others.

In the GGL competition, "the objective was to discover a particular methodology to link the micro to the macro. So there was a very specific capacity-building objective—not a general one. It was at a higher level." (I-2). Awardees in this competition, as already discussed, gained capacity through this focus on methodology in the workshop, research process, monitoring, and through the meetings to develop the final publication.

Some indirect capacity building results also emerged from both the GGL competition, although they were not a formal objective in the CFP. In the Vietnam project, there was a workshop for researchers on participatory gender mapping, as well as a gender analysis workshop. And in the Amazonia project, in which "action" and "research" were most thoroughly integrated, there were exchanges amongst

...[W]e've had links...especially with the women's movement. And it's been a reciprocal relationship. For example, the coordinator of a women's centre calls me up and tells me there's a meeting of a network of anti-violence organizations and asks me to make a presentation. I think that's alright, for them to get the most they can out of us, taking advantage of the fact that we're going to be there. That's how research processes should work, because you're giving something back almost immediately. (L-6)

producer groups and community members aimed at building their organizational capacity. The Cameroon project's final report notes that the project raised "awareness among the rural populations, of what a globalising project could do...The process of eliciting information was an educational one ... because it gave them an opportunity to understand more about their rights. It also raised gender awareness among them, as they had to reflect over their relationships..."

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The assumption in the decentralization competitions was that the senior researchers attracted to the competition would not require much methodological support; however, such was not the case across the board. Although most had carried out research, many—especially those involved in field and activist work—had not been involved in designing and managing research projects of this scope and complexity. In addition, these competitions encouraged “action-research” and feminist approaches which were new to some and many experimented with tools that were new to them.

The uneven quality of results in SSA-D suggests that more methodological support would have been useful in this competition. In the SA-D and LAC-D cases, participation in the Buenos Aires workshop, the midterm workshop in Delhi for SA-D, the web fora and conferences for LAC-D, and generally closer monitoring, meant there were more opportunities for researchers to reflect on their methodologies and learn from each other and from WRC or FLACSO-Argentina team members. In the Bolivia project, the lead researchers were invited through IDRC to share their experiences in a workshop in Panama on “Sensitive Research Methodologies with Indigenous Women” in November 2007. For almost everyone, the awards offered a learning experience in terms of projects design and management, and methodology.

Another product [of the project] is the “handmade” methodology of techniques that are very friendly to the different cosmovisions—not going in with something created a priori, but adjusting to what’s there, for example, cognitive maps, life histories, exchange workshops, etc. We’re working on local knowledge... Anthropologists use these techniques, but we’ve tried to use them without set criteria...in open chats instead of structured interviews, for example. For example, we’ve asked them to “draw how you see water.” It’s about epistemological interculturality. Sometimes you can’t get at other epistemologies from within a scientific logic. We’ve tried not to put our own ideas into the methodology too much. (L-4)

Since these competitions did not require previous experience in gender-focused research, gender was another area in which there were capacity gains for some lead researchers, juniors, and/or for the host institutions. In Bolivia, the project was developed and hosted by PROAGRO, an NGO active in the irrigation sector. The awardees noted that the project was the first time that there had been a systematic analysis within PROAGRO on the gender dimensions of irrigation management.¹⁰ In the Bénin project, one of the junior researchers interviewed also mentioned the benefit of gaining experience in gender-focused research. And similar gains were noted in other projects. Awardees in almost all the competitions reported that junior researchers and assistants gained in various ways from their involvement. One talked about how a research assistant “initially [...] ... was reluctant to undertake [the fieldwork]...she was more or less just sitting in, and towards the end she was undertaking the [fieldwork]...she was far more confident, she was comfortable, able to deal with the project.” (D-4) In a couple of projects, junior researchers

¹⁰ Mónica Rosenfeld, *Crónica de Viaje Paraguay – Bolivia 22-29 abril* (May 9, 2007), p. 17.
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moved on to begin doctoral studies or other related initiatives as a result of their involvement. According to one awardee: “I feel, honestly, that this is perhaps where we’ve had the most impact.” (S-3)

The decentralization competitions also encouraged partnerships “between academic and women’s rights advocacy groups, which we saw as creating opportunities for capacity-building to work in both directions within the project itself, where academics could gain experience on policy and advocacy, and rights groups gain research experience. (I-3) The results on this front varied – being generally stronger in the South Asian and Latin American projects than in those in Africa, mainly because the researchers and host institutions in those cases had stronger links with the communities and organizations involved in the research process. Moreover, while partnerships often facilitated researchers’ access to research sites and data, and partners sometimes gained in research capacity or in other ways, there was little evidence of academics gaining “experience on policy and advocacy.”

A detailed assessment of the competitions impacts on partner organizations and others is outside the scope of this evaluation, but benefits of various kinds do seem to have been generated through project activities. In the Bénin project, for example, 30 people participated in capacity-building workshops aimed at enhancing skills and knowledge to contribute to community planning around natural resource management. In the Nigeria project, 20 women participated in “constituency-building workshops” aimed at strengthening women’s leadership and organization in civil society, and women from eight local government authorities took part in gender planning and budgeting workshops. Similar results were reported in many projects, where teams sometimes responded on an *ad hoc* basis to requests or opportunities to provide assistance by holding training workshops, making presentations, or support ongoing initiatives relevant to the project themes. Such opportunities seemed to arise more organically in cases – especially in LAC-D – where awardees or host institutions were active in the field, and although it is hard to assess the results, it seems likely that such interventions would produce more sustainable contributions, being better integrated with ongoing work and contacts.

We do lots of training and we also prepare training materials. This project will allow us, through the research, to get new ideas, work in new areas, build capacities. [...] Normally we don't do much formal research, just quick assessments as we design the training, so this gives us an opportunity to do more in-depth research on a bigger scale. UNNATI does research, but also capacity-building, training, advocacy, but we do more documentation and training. (S-2)

The challenge is that [some of the partner organizations] had little capacity at the start, but with time and our interactions, now they can make good reports. In the beginning, we had to keep calling all the time. The positive thing is they have lots of information on the local scenario. (S-5)

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In the SA-D competition, there were examples of structured agreements between the awardees and partners in the field who assisted directly with research (a suggestion in the CFP). In such cases, the partner organizations often benefited from training workshops to prepare them for carrying out research surveys, focus groups, interviews, or other research components. These partnerships were not always easy to manage—another element to be taken into account in considering how realistic timelines are—but do seem to benefit both sides, providing researchers with access to communities that might otherwise be difficult, and increasing the research capacity of the partners.

I. Policy Influence and Dissemination

The GGL competition did not highlight policy influence and dissemination beyond the objective of “modelling” gender research within IDRC that appeared in the PAD, the CFP noting only that proposals would be evaluated, in part, on “impact of research.” In the decentralization competitions, by contrast, policy impact was an important objective. Some of the GGL and most of the decentralization projects clearly articulated their projects’ policy relevance and some followed through on good dissemination plans, but in some cases this aspect was fairly weak. Other evaluations of competitive programs at IDRC have found the same, and suggest that IDRC staff need to be realistic about what can be expected in this regard. Another option is to ensure that support on policy and dissemination is built into monitoring plans and seen as a capacity-building opportunity, although such an approach would require both money and time. It may also be necessary to decide in advance the desired balance is between research and dissemination, since one 18 to 24 month project cannot realistically collect and analyze large amounts of empirical data *and* include significant time and effort on advocacy and dissemination—especially if there is an action-research element in the project, which can also be more time-consuming. One option would be to add these components separately at the end—if the quality and relevance of findings seems to warrant it (as in LAC-D). Planning currently underway for the global workshop on women’s rights and decentralization—where attention is being paid to policy influence and communications, including plans to build capacity in these areas amongst awardees—is an example of how additional dissemination and policy components can be added following analysis of their potential impact.

Projects in all four competitions tended to generate two kinds of dissemination and policy impacts: first, indirect or informal impacts linked to the research process itself—particularly when the research was more participatory; and second, formal dissemination strategies and products. The results of the former are especially difficult to assess, and tend to overlap with the kind of indirect capacity building results noted in the previous section, but all the projects generated some results of this kind, with awardees reporting that interviews, focus group discussions, workshops, and other activities involving national or local officials,

In [one case study community] ...we supported and contributed to the formulation of the women's strategic plan—not directly, but the project activities strengthened and created spaces to move the process forward. (L-3)

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politicians, various grassroots and women's groups, or other researchers provided opportunities to raise policy relevant issues, share knowledge, and advocate for policy change, as well as contributing to the formation of networks and linkages related to the competition themes.

In the GGL Ghana project, the research fed directly into the project leader's work on a civil society "Women's Manifesto" as well as putting her in a position to provide advice to a government ministry. The final project activity for the GGL Amazonia project was a workshop that presented and discussed the results during a general meeting of the Quebradeiras de Côco Babaçu (Babacu-Nut breakers). The results of the discussions were then presented to authorities and policy makers. Researchers in many of the decentralization competitions also reported that the research process brought women's rights and decentralization issues to the attention of various stakeholders, generating interest and reflection, and actual or potential action. Unfortunately, such results are often intangible, or their full force may become evident only over the long term, making it difficult to assess them and attribute results to the projects. Placing more emphasis on this aspect in the CFP and reporting guidelines might make it easier to both encourage and track this kind of policy influence—and to generate lessons about what works well.

Planned advocacy and dissemination strategies, including products such as articles, reports, and dissemination workshops are easier to quantify, but do not necessarily provide reliable information about *actual* policy influence, which in the absence of a detailed follow-up study has to be extrapolated from the number, quality, and type of dissemination products and activities. In the GGL competition, the participation of the researchers in the International Sociological Association Conference in Norway midway through the projects was one dissemination opportunity facilitated by IDRC, and the joint publication currently in process, also facilitated by IDRC, is likely to be the most influential dissemination tool.

In this regard, the SSA-D competition had a mixed record, while final results are not yet available from most SA-D and LAC-D projects. The South Africa project followed through on a systematic dissemination plan, holding six dissemination workshops (co-funded by the EU), in addition to making presentations to academic conferences, producing academic publications, contributing to publications aimed at the policy community, and producing a popular format version of the research for wide distribution to policymakers, officials, NGO activists, and others. The Bénin project team made two presentations to national workshops on agricultural policy, but their other planned dissemination activities—a documentary film, and information posters—was not complete by the time the project closed, and the project officer was not provided with copies of any scholarly or other papers resulting from the project. For the Nigeria project, policy impacts and dissemination opportunities also mainly resulted from workshops and consultations carried out during the research phase itself. During the research, participants developed "action plans" whose implementation the project team was to have monitored; however this part of the project was dropped. The main dissemination product was an academic book manuscript, not yet complete as the project closed.

The Sudan proposal envisioned a number materials and booklets in local languages, as well as holding meetings, seminars and conferences, with "communities, administrators, NGOs and other groups" to disseminate their findings; however, the final report does not mention any of

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this. As promised in the proposal, a set of gender-sensitive indicators was presented in the final report, but it was not accompanied by a dissemination or advocacy strategy. Nevertheless, the project leader reported that the project allowed her organization, the Gender Center, to build a strategic relationship with the national Ministry of Education, to which the team was invited to present its research findings. In addition, the Gender Center was selected to conduct a curriculum review of basic education from a gender perspective, with UNICEF support, an outcome that the project leader attributes to the project, suggesting the importance of these more unpredictable results to the lasting policy influence of the projects.

As noted already, the SA-D and LAC-D competitions are still in their final stages so it is too early to assess their final products and impacts. However, most of these projects had plans for dissemination workshops, books, articles and other tangible products. Moreover, many of the host institutions or project leaders were well placed to make good use of the findings of the research in policy-relevant venues and some have paid attention to policy links throughout. For example, members of the Paraguay team have good policy links in the health sector, with one having been involved in developing the health sector policy for the recently elected government. In the Rajasthan SA-D project, the project team has had links with government officials from the beginning of the project, and one of the lead researchers in the Gujarat/Maharashtra water sector project is the co-ordinator of the Indian "Women and Water Network" through which she has had ongoing involvement in advocacy in the sector.

In both SA-D and LAC-D the planned final competition workshops, as well as the global conference in Mexico in November 2008 will provide important dissemination opportunities. And in SSA-D, although no final dissemination event occurred during the competition cycle, the workshop held in Dakar in January 2008 gave some visibility to the projects and issues by inviting donor representatives, elected officials and others to take part in a public event presenting and discussing findings.

IV. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The Competition Modality

- good competition management is labour-intensive and complex (this finding emerges from other small grants/competitions evaluations, but is supported by my findings)
- competitions offer potential advantages and disadvantages
- disadvantages have to do with increased risk, related in turn to reduced opportunities for guidance and intervention in comparison with regular project development activities
- advantages relate to the numerous potential benefits of competitions that emerge from this evaluation and previous evaluations within IDRC. These include:
 - Expansion of networks: Competitions can attract researchers that are not already “in the loop” in terms of IDRC funding or contacts; for the WRC team in particular, a competition can help find new partners;
 - Fairness: Competitions are often seen as more “fair” and transparent than other funding mechanisms;
 - Assessment of state of the art: Competitions can help assess the state of knowledge, research capacity, and/or interest in a given field;
 - Creation of new knowledge: Competitions can help *generate* knowledge, capacity and interest in a given field. NB—the decentralization competitions demonstrate both these aspects—on the one hand, they have turned up some researchers who have already worked on gender and decentralization issues—for example, in South Africa—but many of the researchers are people who are *interested* in the theme, but have not worked on it before;
 - Efficiency: One process can initiate a variety of projects, so that more knowledge and other benefits (such as capacity building and policy impacts) are generated for less effort. In fact, neither the GGL nor the SSA-D competitions give much evidence that this benefit can be expected from a competition, since in both cases it appears that an enormous amount of time and effort was invested and the results were variable. Nevertheless, it remains a potential benefit of competitions, dependent on other conditions.
 - Simultaneity: Competitions can generate a body of knowledge, from various locations and/or perspectives, on the same general topic, within a defined time period of time. A potentially positive effect of simultaneity is that it can help jump start research in a certain area. It also has the potential to facilitate other benefits, such as opportunities for network formation, stronger policy impacts, and more effective and efficient dissemination.
 - Synergy: Having a number of simultaneous projects on the same theme can generate synergy that has the potential to be very productive and exciting. This seems to have occurred to a certain extent in the GGL competition, largely because it was facilitated through the workshops. The workshop reports from GGL give the sense that (as in the Buenos Aires workshop for the decentralization competition) the experience helped convert the competition into something more than the sum of its project parts and contributed to the overall success of the competition. This benefit—which is not automatic—is linked to the networking opportunities presented by competitions, since presumably the more networking is facilitated, the more synergy is likely to be generated, and vice versa.

Recommendations:

- continue to use competitions as a programming modality, but initiate some changes to reduce risk and maximize the particular benefits of competitions
- do not choose competition modality to save labour, but purposively for the gains to be expected from running a competition
- be prepared to invest significant time and effort into competition management
- consider a two-step selection process (i.e. initial applicants submit a short proposal, and a smaller group is invited to present more detailed proposals, possibly with some funding compensation and/or site visits incorporated into the selection process)
- emphasize comparative potential of selected projects—and consequently policy impact—by keeping the thematic focus relatively narrow and ensuring that key competition themes are front and centre in all winning projects
- include inception, midterm and final workshops in the competition cycle to reduce risk by creating opportunities for WRC staff or other resource people to comment directly on proposals, in person, before projects are launched; to ensure opportunities for rigorous methodological and conceptual preparation and reflection prior to launch of projects; and to maximize networking and synergy-building opportunities
- ensure project visit before the halfway point

Competition Objectives

- objectives that are not highlighted in the CFP may be overlooked in implementation
- objectives are likely to be fulfilled to the extent that they are linked to specific activities and taken into account in the design of the competition cycle
- even when policy relevance is highlighted as an objective, policy influence and dissemination do not occur automatically and are often weak points in project implementation

Recommendations:

- in designing a competition, consider the desired balance between objectives of discovering or assessing research capacity in a certain theme, and generating research capacity. Then, prepare the CFP and design the cycle of competition activities accordingly. A competition weighted to the latter objective will more require specific work on building capacity than a competition weighted to the former, which may offer more opportunities for indirect capacity-building (as the SSA-D competition was intended to do), for networking, or for joint policy work.
- if a competition modality is selected, it should either be more narrowly focussed with “smaller” expectations (e.g. narrow research themes, very experienced researchers in established institutions, no high-risk projects, etc.) or expanded, investing more staff time (or partner time) and funding, and expanding the objectives to include networking, possibly planned capacity-building activities, and joint dissemination and policy/advocacy strategies. The latter option seems to mesh better with the WRC mandate as more conducive to feminist research agenda, collaborative and collective forms of work and mutual support, etc.

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- to the extent that policy influence and dissemination are important objectives, they should be clearly highlighted in the calls for proposals and followed up carefully in subsequent monitoring
- to the extent that networking is an objective, it should be made explicit, highlighted in the calls for proposals, and linked to specific results and activities in the competition cycle

Research themes and topics

- projects with multiple or very broad or complex topics and themes, or many or very dispersed research sites, were harder to manage than more focussed ones and sometimes produced results that with comparatively weaker policy relevance
- involving experts outside IDRC and consulting broadly on themes works well
- commissioning background papers helps establish a common framework for the competition and ensure a degree of cohesion amongst projects

Recommendations:

- ensure that the calls for proposals are tightly focussed along thematic or geographic lines—or both (GGL focussed on theme, but not tightly enough to compensate for the geographic dispersal; SSA-D focussed regionally, but perhaps needed a tighter thematic focus on decentralization)
- be specific in CFP about what is wanted: a competition is an appropriate arena for a more tightly-controlled definition of research agenda by IDRC, especially if the process of selecting themes is sufficiently consultative with a broad range of groups
- use inception workshop and possibly follow-up workshops, or some form of communication amongst projects (e.g. along the lines of the virtual fora in the LAC competition) to help keep projects thematically and methodologically on track and facilitate thematic and conceptual engagement amongst them

Selection processes

- selection processes were well-organized and worked reasonably well
- use of external experts on selection committees is helpful as long as IDRC retains final control
- calls for proposals were disseminated widely and, in general, targeted the intended audience
- transparency is a major benefit of competitions, appreciated by awardees
- the quality of proposals received was variable
- there is no obvious correlation between a certain profile of researcher or institution and positive project outcomes
- the GGL and SSA-D experiences suggest that projects that appear weak in the proposal stage will probably remain weak, and the amount of improvement that can be expected once a project is selected is limited
- problems identified at the proposal stage are likely to remain
- researchers are unlikely to make major changes to their proposals once the award is made, at least under the current arrangements

Recommendations

- possibly a more creative effort in disseminating the research call might increase chances of receiving better quality proposals

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- more detailed calls for proposals, with more stringent conditions, would increase self-screening and reduce number of poor proposals received
- do not select weak proposals in hopes they will improve over time
- consider creating a two-step selection process as noted above, moving toward something like a hybrid between competition and regular project development. This option would be more labour and time intensive – perhaps raising the question why use competitions at all? However, it would maintain the benefits of competitions in terms of targeting a broader audience and establishing new contacts for WRC, generating simultaneous and more efficient research, capacity-building, and policy results, and offering some conditions for networking
- if a two-step process is not used, write into the CFP a requirement for a revised proposal based on specific recommendations as part of the competition process prior to first disbursement of funds, to produce a revised proposal

Program administration

- projects in the competition almost never finish on time; unforeseeable delays of various kinds nearly always ensue; research almost always takes longer than expected
- most awardees end up feeling their projects are too big for the proposed budget
- researchers are often over committed and in practice cannot or do not devote the expected time to the projects
- the amount of data collected almost always exceeds expectations and puts time pressure on the analysis stage, which can suffer as a result
- administrative issues such as budget problems, country clearances, etc., can seriously delay project launch dates and undermine the benefit of simultaneity in competitions

Recommendations

- establish a common timeline for all project; 24 months seems realistic
- encourage awardees to build in contingency funds and extra time in their project timelines for unforeseen developments, which are, after all, common in their research environments
- help speed project launch by encouraging applicants to think ahead (e.g. at the CFP stage) about the documents they will need and official transactions that will need to take place prior to project start-up
- consider including session on IDRC financial reporting policies and procedures in the inception workshop to help head off administrative bottlenecks

Outsourcing competition management

- outsourcing competition management does not necessarily significantly reduce workload for IDRC staff
- outsourcing can be a good opportunity to increase capacity in a Southern partner as a research intermediary
- outsourcing to a region can be a good way to compensate for a lack of local contacts on the part of IDRC
- managing an “outsourcing” relationship is complex administratively as well as in terms of human relationships; there is plenty of space for misunderstanding or mismatched expectations on the part of the various stakeholders
- trust and openness on both sides is important to the success of the relationship between IDRC and the “outsourcing” partner

Recommendations

- before deciding to outsource competition management, there should be thorough discussion of the nature and objectives of the outsourcing relationship within the IDRC team: is it mainly seen as “contracting out” elements of competition management, or is it seen as a partnership? Is the main goal to ease workload for Centre staff, or to increase capacity in the host institution? How important is the host institution to advancing the strategic agenda behind the competition?
- clarity and exhaustive detail in TORs, MGCs, etc. must ensure roles and responsibilities are delineated with no room for confusion
- A “go-between” from the IDRC team to work closely with the partner and help with start-up is probably essential

Communications and monitoring

- communication problems can signal deeper problems in a project
- good communication between project officers and awardees help keep projects on track and help keep awardees committed
- awardees greatly appreciate qualities of flexibility, openness, and engagement on the part of IDRC project officers
- monitoring in competitions is complex and sometimes very difficult because of short time lines, lack of resources, number of simultaneous projects, etc.
- researchers often fail to report adequately, despite their statements that the reporting guidelines are clear
- reporting is often weak on analysis of results and descriptions of data collected
- awardees sometimes feel they do not receive enough specific or formal feedback on their reports
- project visits are important to successful monitoring since it is often difficult to assess the quality and quantity of data collected in a project solely on the basis of reports
- extreme problems in projects may not become apparent until well into the timeline

Recommendations

- provide even more detailed reporting guidelines and milestones, especially with respect to the presentation of data collection and analysis
- consider revisions to the reporting guidelines to put more emphasis on substance relative to process
- include a session on reporting in inception workshop
- let awardees know at the start what kind of feedback they should expect from reports or project visits
- ensure project visits occur in the first half of each project
- structure competitions to facilitate monitoring, e.g. within a single region; or with meetings during which individual monitoring sessions with each project can be carried out more efficiently (this took place for the GGL competition during the Norway conference, with SA-D in Buenos Aires and Delhi)

Research

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- some projects were very broad either in terms of topics or geographic scope or number of case studies, and this seemed to contribute to problems in data collection or analysis
- a common problem in the projects, despite their overall success, occurred when a great deal of data was collected but it was not well integrated and analysis was weak
- ensuring the quality of analysis and conceptual thinking is the most difficult task in terms of research results
- some projects did not focus sufficiently on the competition themes (e.g. decentralization)
- there was a great deal of variation in methodological capacity and the level of theoretical engagement

Recommendations

- encourage more focussed topics and research
- limit the thematic or geographic scope of projects
- encourage researchers to consider more carefully and realistically the amount of data they may collect and the time required to analyze it adequately
- encourage conceptual analysis from the start
- encourage deep reflection from the start on key competition themes (e.g. decentralization, gender, etc)

Capacity building

- researchers, even experienced ones, are enthusiastic about opportunities for methodological and other learning
- competitions provide potential and opportunity for horizontal capacity-building amongst awardees
- indirect capacity building results (i.e. via researchers' work with grassroots or other organizations) may be important but are often difficult to discern and assess
- capacity-building gains to junior researchers in project teams are valued
- there was little evidence of project teams gaining in advocacy or other capacity from partnerships with women's organizations
- capacity building continues to be seen as a minor or even non-existent objective of the research competitions

Recommendations

- include in more specific capacity building objectives or targets in the calls for proposals if there is an expectation that projects will generate such indirect capacity results
- create more structured opportunities for awardees to share relevant skills and experiences (especially on methodology) with each other in competition workshops, etc.
- help researchers think about ways to track and report on capacity building opportunities and results

Policy influence and dissemination results

- policy influence and dissemination are not always well integrated in the projects
- it is likely that additional dissemination of results, as well as advocacy related to the results, will occur after then end of the project and thus not be captured in a final report
- researchers are not always best placed to gain best dissemination results or policy impacts (a point made in earlier Small Grants review)
- by project completion, especially in an 18-month project, it is not usually possible to see many dissemination results or assess their impacts

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- policy impacts generally can only be extrapolated from dissemination or other activities—would require a follow-up evaluation to get at policy impacts, and even then it would probably be difficult to tie them down (some exceptions may be possible, such as Dzodzi Tsikata's contribution to the NGO Women's Manifesto)
- many policy results are indirect and difficult to measure

Recommendations

- place more emphasis on dissemination plans in the calls for proposals
- plan for more IDRC-facilitated dissemination (e.g. through books, articles, conferences, etc.)
- provide more support to researchers on policy influence and dissemination, possibly by devoting time to this issue in competition workshops
- consider developing a set of indicators or a checklist tool to help researchers track dissemination and policy opportunities and outcomes

Competitions and networking

- networks do not emerge spontaneously from a competition structure, although the network structure does create the opportunity for network formation
- networking was not given priority in the GGL and SSA-D competitions, but both project officers and awardees were interested in networking
- researchers engage in networking when (but mainly *only* when, and *not always* when) it is facilitated
- networking opportunities are appreciated and desired by researchers yet in practice they may not make much effort to take advantage of such opportunities
- other sources show that networking is most successful if there are opportunities for face-to-face meetings, if the objectives and benefits are evident, and if it is tied to tangible goals and outputs
- networking may enhance many aspects of a competition, such as policy impact, coherence, quality of research efforts, capacity-building, sustainability, etc. (this insight based on IDRC and other work on networks); it has merit in terms of South-South exchange, and may enhance a women's rights mandate by supporting women and feminist researchers working in difficult environments

Recommendations:

- sharpen the objectives around networking for the competitions, and consider making network creation an explicit competition objective
 - this requires thinking about exactly why would networking be good for the researchers? What practical/intellectual value would they get out of it that would motivate them to put time and energy into it? What policy or other benefits would come out of it for IDRC? What capacity benefits? What particular kinds of networking would be best to encourage these particular kinds of benefits—i.e. not just “networking in general” but something more specific, at least concrete opportunities for exchange. [NB that the SA and LAC decentralization competitions are emerging as somewhat more network oriented, but still somewhat ad hoc in this regard, since networking was not included from the start as an explicit competition objective in these cases]
- systematically take advantage of existing resources on networking within IDRC and, in relation to competition design and management, focus on learning around networks within WRC

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- design competitions to reflect networking objectives (i.e. up to the possibility of reworking the competitions as a network-creation/competition exercise, within realistic limits—e.g. not necessarily an on-going network, but some form of limited term “collaborative research network” for the duration of the projects, implying:
 - designing competition around activities that promote networking such as workshops and other face-to-face meetings, facilitated electronic groups and lists, collaborative processes
 - devoting staff time specifically to networking aspects of the competition
 - writing the rationale and expectations for networking into CFPs
 - including networking capacity as part of selection criteria (this point would require further consideration, but might include selecting awardees with networking experience, with access to varied policy or other resources helpful to network, willing to devote time to network activities, etc.

Annex 1: Summary Logical Framework of Program and Evaluation Issues

-
0. Use annual research competitions to support applied research in the field of women's rights, citizenship and development in order to bring Southern voices into current gender and development debates
- o Assumes research competitions are a good way to support applied research
 - Evaluation issues:** Value added of research competition modality in terms of achieving the stated goal?
1. Select themes, sub-themes, and objectives for research competitions related to women's rights, citizenship and development, that will help give Southern voices access to current debates in international gender and development field
- o Assumes process for developing themes produces relevant research topics
 - o Assumes specific competition objectives contribute to achieving overall program goal
 - Evaluation issues:** Effectiveness of themes, subtopics and objectives in terms of contributing to the stated goal?
2. Call for proposals
- o Assumes appropriate researchers and groups will have access to and interest in competition
 - o Assumes call for proposals is effective in conveying goals and requirements
 - o **Evaluation issues:** Access to competition, effectiveness of call for proposals, relevance of competition to target researchers and groups, ability of target researchers and groups to compete, WRC facilitation of the process
3. Select proposals for funding
- o Assumes call for proposals will generate competition amongst good-quality proposals relevant to achieving the program goals and specific competition objectives
 - o Assumes selection process will select researchers or project participants that will benefit from capacity building opportunities, and projects that will generate relevant and applicable knowledge
 - Evaluation issues:** Quantity and quality of competition and effectiveness of selection process
4. Facilitate research projects so as to achieve the specific competition objectives, as part of the overall goal of generating applied research in the field of women's rights, citizenship and development in order to bring Southern voices into current debates
- o Assumes support to researchers and their project participations will promote new research and other capacities in researchers and other project participants
 - o Assumes projects will produce good quality, relevant research results

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- Assumes research and capacity-building activities will help promote the entry of “Southern voices” in favour of women’s rights, citizenship and development
- Assumes successful facilitation of opportunities to disseminate new knowledge and skills in relevant venues and policy circles
- Assumes sustainability of gains in capacity by researchers and other participants
- Assumes effectiveness of access to debates and policy circles

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Annex 2: Evaluation Framework and Matrix

Evaluation Framework: WRC Research Competition Evaluation, 2006-2008

I. Introduction

Women's Rights and Citizenship (WRC) is a new IDRC program, launched April 1st, 2006. A successor to IDRC's Gender Unit, it falls within the Social and Economy Policy (SEP) program area. WRC is motivated by a vision "of a just world where women in the South have a sense of self that includes citizenship and the right to have rights; where all individuals have equitable access to justice and the opportunity to participate meaningfully in democratic decision-making; and where there is no discrimination based on gender in realizing the full range of one's rights and freedoms, including economic rights and sexual and reproductive rights." The Gender Unit chose annual research competitions as a key modality for achieving its objectives. The WRC team has decided to contract an evaluation of the WRC research competition program to assess the design and selections processes, implementation, and outcomes.

II. Purpose of the Evaluation Framework

This document provides an overview of what the evaluation will cover and how it will be conducted. It also breaks down evaluation issues, questions, indicators, data and methods in table form.

III. WRC Research Competitions

Through its research competitions, as well as through other programming, WRC aims to contribute to bringing Southern voices into current debates in the international gender and development field, supporting applied research in the field of women's rights, citizenship and development. This evaluation examines the 2001-2002 competition on Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure as well as three competitions run as part of a multi-regional, multi-year series under the heading of Decentralization and Women's Rights.

The Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure competition was designed to support cutting-edge research that would contribute to filling gaps in knowledge about the role of gender in natural resource management, with a view to improving IDRC's programming in this area. Four main sub-themes were identified for the competition: governance, HIV/AIDS, knowledge, and livelihood security/ environmental sustainability. Five awards, valued between \$80,000 and \$100,000 each, were offered to researchers from Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Vietnam and Brazil (Amazonia).

The competition series on decentralization recognizes that decentralization is widespread throughout developing countries and has become a standard part of the policy package recommended by major donor organizations. The competition aims to support evidence-based

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research on whether and how contemporary decentralization reforms in practice contribute to—or hinder—the realization and protection of women’s and girls’ civil, political, social, economic, and/or cultural rights. In addition to generating knowledge, these competitions have aimed at developing research capacities and creating strategic links between researchers and women’s organizations. The first competition in this series was launched in 2004 for sub-Saharan Africa and funded projects in Sudan, Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria and Benin. The second competition was launched in 2005 for South Asia, with five awards made to researchers in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. The last part of the multi-regional series, covering Latin America and the Caribbean, was launched in 2006, and awarded funds to four research projects, in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador/Honduras, and Paraguay.

IV. Objectives and Intended Use of the Evaluation

According to the Terms of Reference (TORs), the overall goal of the evaluation is “to inform the program in the process of designing and implementing upcoming competitions.” More specifically, the objectives are to:

6. Assess the competitions’ selection process and approach
7. Assess the implementation process of the competitions both in terms of concept and approach, and in terms of processes
8. Assess the results of the two Gender Unit thematic competitions (outputs, reach and outcomes) and analyze their influence
9. Provide reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the competition modality
10. Identify key lessons learned to feed into women’s rights strategies for programming

The primary intended user for the evaluation is the WRC program team, who will use the information and analysis it generates to help inform the development of future projects.. The evaluation outcomes will assist the WRC program in reflecting on such issues as whether competitions are an effective way of achieving program objectives, what elements of the competitions should be replicated, and how future competitions could be improved.

In addition to the WRC team, other audiences for the evaluation will include other IDRC staff and other program stakeholders, such as awardees, partner organizations and resource people. The general public will also have access to the final evaluation report through the IDRC website and library.

V. Approach and Methodology

The evaluation process will be guided by a commitment to thoroughness and accuracy, critical analysis, a focus on the intended use of the evaluation, and meaningful participation by program stakeholders—not only in answering evaluation questions, but also in formulating and expressing their own criteria with respect to the effectiveness of project implementation and achievements.

The evaluation will combine process evaluation—describing and assessing the delivery of activities, programs and strategies to WRC team partners and awardees, and outcome evaluation—dealing with the impact of these activities, programs and strategies on the targeted

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beneficiaries. Process evaluation asks questions about *how* the research competitions are being implemented, while outcome evaluation asks questions about *what* and *whether* objectives are met. But although process and outcome evaluation can be analytically distinguished, the close links between the two will be reflected throughout the evaluation. For example, capacity-building involves both process and outcome. In addition, the achievement of program objectives depends largely on the appropriateness and effectiveness of implementation and a useful evaluation must identify and analyze the relationships between outcomes and the processes through which they are achieved.

VI. Data Sources and Collection Methods

The evaluation will be based on analysis of all 19) individual research projects carried out through the four annual research competitions under study. Information sources will include:

- **Documents**, including competition announcements and calls for proposals, competition background papers, Gender Unit/WRC program documentation, awardees' proposals, documentation from selection process, awardee contracts, workshop reports, other IDRC evaluations, and other relevant literature (e.g. related to the subject-matter of the competitions) such as *trip reports*, *"notes to file,"* *official letters from GAD, PCRs and r-PCRs*, and *book chapter drafts for some projects*.
- **Stakeholders and observers**, including the WRC team, awardees, partner organizations, other relevant IDRC staff, resource people, advisory committee members, and others

The information will be collected through:

- **Document review and analysis**
- **Interviews**, in person when possible, or by phone otherwise. For the decentralization competitions, initial interviews will be carried out during the Buenos Aires workshop in August 2006.
- **Focus-group discussion with WRC team members in Montevideo.**
- **Meetings** and other communication with WRC team.
- **Email communication**, with stakeholders as necessary

VII. Evaluation Products and Reporting

The TORs specify that the evaluator will produce the following outputs:

1. Evaluation framework and interview protocol
2. Evaluation Interim reports
3. Monitoring reports
4. Final Evaluation report
5. Synthesis of lessons learned, focussing on recommendations

The evaluation, including the final evaluation report, will reflect the expected outcomes noted in the TORs as well as other issues that are highlighted in discussions with the WRC team, and that emerge in the evaluation process itself. In particular, it should:

1. Examine how and why the specific objectives, benefits and expected outcomes were or were not achieved;
2. Identify the extent and implications of Competitions outcomes in social, economic, financial, institutional terms

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3. Incorporate views and expertise of groups who have benefited from, been involved in, or affected by the Competitions Grants
4. Discuss lessons learned in term of relevance, efficacy and efficiency of the different competitions
5. Discuss operational and developmental lessons learned from the Competitions and their activities.

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Annex 3: List of Interviews

GGL awardees

Amazonia: Noemi Porro

Ghana: Dzodzi Tsikata

SSA-D awardees

Bénin: Adjoua Pascaline Ida Babadamkpodji, Okiry Akochaye Prosper Adjadja

South Africa: Alison Todes, Amanda Williamson

Sudan: Asha El Karib

Nigeria: Simi Afonja

LAC-D awardees

El Salvador/Honduras: Morena Herrera (3 interviews)

Ecuador: Maria Arboleda (3 interviews)

Bolivia: Zulema and Marina (3 interviews)

Paraguay: Patricio Dobrée (3 interviews, one including

SA-D awardees

Pakistan: Shakila Bibi (3 interviews)

Rajasthan: Alice Morris (3 interviews)

Kerala: Rajan (1 interview) J Devika (2 interviews)

Gujarat/Maharashtra: Seema Kulkani and Sara Ahmad (1 interviews); Seema only (2 interviews)

Nepal: Basundhara (1 interview, 1 written response to questionnaire); Netra Timsima (1 written response to questionnaire)

WRC team

Navsharan Singh, (1 written response to questionnaire, 1 interview)

Ramata Thioune

Claudie Gosselin (3 interviews)

Pamela Golah (2 interviews)

Eloisa Martínez

FLACSO-Argentina team

Gloria Bondar (3 interviews)

Mónica Rosenfeld (3 interviews)

Others

Consultant: Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay

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Annex 4: Sample Interview Protocol Interview Protocol – Dec’z’n – Awardees – SSA

Date:

Start Time: **Total Time:**

Interviewee:

Introduction

Introduction of self, evaluation process, purpose of the interview. _____

Advise interview should take between 30 and 60 minutes. _____

Encourage reflective answers, examples and additional comments. _____

Note interview is not confidential, but anything interviewee requests to say off the record may be kept confidential with recorder turned off or not transcribed _____

Solicit any questions from interviewee about the interview. _____

Interview

To begin, I would like to ask for some general background about the project and your participation in it.

Q1. Please tell me a little about yourself, your role in the research competition program, and the stage your project has reached to date.

Now, I would like to ask some questions about your initial contact with the project and your experiences in the selection and design process.

Q2. How did you first hear about this research competition?

Q3. Why made you decide to apply?

Prompt: What benefits did you believe it could offer to you/your organization?

Q4. How does the theme and approach of the research competition fit in with your own/your organization’s other work?

Melissa MacLean, Consultant

Final Evaluation Report: Evaluation of WRC Research Competitions Program

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Prompt: Were you/your organization already carrying out work in this area? Was the approach—i.e. applied research and partnership with women’s organizations—similar to approaches you/your organization had taken in the past, or something new?

Q5. Do you think that you or your organization would have been likely to carry out this or a similar project in the absence of the IDRC award?

Prompt: What difference, if any, has the competition made to the way you have designed and carried out the project?

Q6. What are the objectives of the research competition program, from your point of view?

Q7. Could you tell me about your experience of the application and selection process?

Prompt: Were you in communication with IDRC during the preparation of the proposal? Did you find the call for proposals clear and appropriate? Did you experience any difficulties in the proposal and selection process?

Q8. I understand a workshop that had been planned for the beginning of the SSA competition was not held for a number of reasons. Did this affect the implementation of the project, from your point of view?

Prompt: Do you feel the workshop would have been a valuable addition? Can you tell me why it was not held?

The next set of questions deals mainly with the implementation of the project itself.

Q9. In addition to funding, what kind of support have you received from IDRC in carrying out the project?

Q10. What has been your experience of project monitoring by IDRC?

Prompt: What is your perspective on the contract as a mechanism for managing project expectations and responsibilities? What was your experience in preparing and receiving feedback on the interim and/or final financial and technical reports? Are there any issues that you would like to highlight with respect to project monitoring?

Q11. In retrospect, do you feel that the project objectives and the timelines for reporting and other outputs were appropriate and feasible? If there were problems, what do you think was the cause?

Q12. Could you tell me about your experience with the financial side of the award?

Prompt: Do you feel that the level of funding has been adequate for the project’s needs? Why, or why not? Have there been any difficulties in the administration of the funding?

Q13. Are there any issues that you would like to highlight with respect to staffing of the project?

Prompt: Do you feel you were able to find and hire the people you needed to implement the project? If there were any challenges, please tell me about them.

Melissa MacLean, Consultant

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Q14. What has been your experience with respect to contact and communication with IDRC during the course of the project?

Prompt: How frequently are you in communication with IDRC [partner organization]? With whom do you mainly communicate, how, and for what purpose? Who most often initiates contact? Are there any communications challenges, either logistical or personal?

Q15. Over the course of the project, have you developed any new relationships with other researchers or research organizations, women's organizations, or decision makers, or have your existing relationships changed in any way? If so, how?

Prompt: Did the project involve new partnerships? Involve new contact with local authorities such as councillors or mayors or other officials?

Q16. Could you tell me about any learning opportunities that the implementation of the project has presented for you, other researchers, or others involved?

The next few questions deal with the results of the project.

Q17. Do you feel that the project's research results have met/are meeting the project objectives? What do you find novel or valuable about the research results?

Q18. What about other benefits or results of the project?

Prompt: Who has benefited from it, and in what ways? Women's organizations? Other researchers?

Q19. Do you feel that the project has generated any impacts on policy or decision makers in areas related to the research? Could you give some example(s) (e.g. changes in attitude, behaviour, knowledge, decisions)?

Q20. How have the research results of the project been shared or disseminated thus far?

Prompt: Who do you think is aware of the project and its results, beyond those participating directly in the project? What impact do you feel this dissemination has had? May have in future?

Q21. After the project ends, do you think you will maintain any of the relationships (with other researchers, women's organizations or policymakers) that were generated or strengthened by the project? If so, why? How?

Prompt: Do you foresee any obstacles to maintaining these relationships?

Q22. Do you have any other plans for continuing work related to the project after the project ends? If so, what are they?

Prompt: Do you foresee any challenges in continuing this work?

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As we finish, I would like to ask you to reflect in a general way on your experience with the project.

Q23. What advice would you give IDRC/WRC about developing another similar competition?

Prompt: What do you think could be improved in terms of design and management from their end? What do you think should be replicated?

Q24. What is your overall assessment of the project?

Prompt: What do you feel were the biggest challenges or gaps in the project? Are there any aspects of the project that you see as being especially valuable?

Closing

Solicit additional comments, issues the interview missed or questions about the interview or evaluation.

Note may contact interviewee with additional questions or another interview, by email or phone.

Offer to share transcript.

Provide contact information for follow-up.

Thank interviewee for time and reflections.

End time: _____

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Annex 5: Sample Project Grid

SSA-D	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	South Africa	Sudan
Project Title	Genre et Gestion des Plaines Inondables Dans le Département des Collines au Bénin: Renforcement du Role des Agriculturices dans une Economie Décentralisée	Institutional Change for Women's Rights: Comparing the Effectiveness of Devolution and Deconcentration Arrangements in Gender-Equality Advocacy in Northern Ghana	Engendering Local Level Governance for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: A Learning Experience	Women, Decentralisation and Integrated Development Planning in South Africa	Impact of Decentralization Policies on Women Rights in Sudan: A Case Study of the Impact of Decentralization on Health, Education and Use of Natural Resources
Institution	Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques, Université d'Abomey-Calavi	Institute for Policy Alternatives, Accra (*)	Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban *shifted to Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria	The Gender Centre for Research and Training, Khartoum
Lead Researcher (other researchers)	Dr. Pascaline Babadankpodji (Agro-economist—Economics and Rural Sociology)	Dr. Sulley Gariba (Political Scientist); Grace Yennah; Kathy Durand	Dr. Simi Afonja (Sociologist)	Prof. Alison Todes (Planning); (Dr. Pearl Sithole, Amanda Williamson)	Dr. Asha Elkarib, (Niemat Kuku, MSc, Mohammed Salih MSc.)
Project Grant	\$92,000	\$98,400	\$99,670	\$99,319	\$100,000
Planned Start and Finish Date/ planned duration	February 2005 to August 2006 / 18 months	February 2005 to August 2006 / 18 months	October 2004 to April 2006 / 18 months	September 2004 to September 2006 / 24 months	March 2005 to September 2006 (18 months)
Extensions/ delays/ changes	4 months extension granted in May 2006 (i.e. project to be completed December 2006)	Multiple extensions and delays, communication problems, failures to submit reports, etc. ULTIMATELY CLOSED in November 2006	3 month extension granted (i.e. project to be completed July 2006)	Institutional home shifted midway through project	- Late start due to problems with gaining country approval - Difficulties with field research due to security/political situation
Research Objective	- to investigate, in the context of the decentralization of responsibilities to the local level, the best strategies for women attempting to work in wetland areas and deal with water management problems in the transitional zone in the department of Collines in Benin, with a view to coming up with a concrete action plan for helping women gain equitable access to natural	- to carry out a comparative assessment of the relative effectiveness of two decentralized models of gender-equality advocacy at the district level, devolution and deconcentration	- assess the gender impact of decentralization on women's participation in governance, on the administrative and management structure, and on the evolution of women as a constituency for their transformation	- explore whether and how South Africa's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process, as a form of decentralized planning, furthers gender equity	- assess the impact of decentralization policies and processes on women rights and gender relations in Sudan, with particular reference to their rights and access to economic and social services

SSA-D	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	South Africa	Sudan
Research Questions/ Specific Goals	<p>resources in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collect and analyze information on community development planning with respect to wetlands management, community, especially women's— participation and equity of resource access and management - analyze the impacts of community strategies to manage the wetland zones - develop a pilot project to help integrate women's participation and contribute to more profitable and sustainable wetland management for female farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carry out baseline studies of the two models - after 18 months to assess the outcomes of the advocacy efforts of each model with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to social services on the part of women and girls to meet their practical needs - access to decision-making on the part of women and girls to meet their strategic needs - gender sensitivity of budgets and expenditures on social services affecting women, especially in water, health and education - assess sources and forms of resistance to institutional change in each model and identify strategies for addressing them - examine implications of these models for national public policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review the literature and documentation on decentralization, women in governance and women's agency in Nigeria to determine how far women's interests are being pursued; - assess gender gaps in employment at the LGA level; - Assess local government structure for gender sensitive planning and budgeting - obtain data on the profiles of women voted into political office at the local level since 1999; - document electioneering process pursued by the elected women; - identify policies and Programs initiated and implemented by the women compared with those of men; - propose action plans to improve their roles as leaders and change agents - Implement, monitor and evaluate proposed Programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent have gender equity and women's rights been seen as key principles informing the design of the IDP process at the national level? - Do local participatory processes give women voice in the IDP? - Do municipal planning and budgeting processes reflect women's interests, needs and rights? - Do projects and implementation processes take into account women's needs and rights? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the various types of decentralization adopted in the Sudan in terms of equitable service delivery - Measure the factors that may affect degree to which women's needs for health, education, and access to natural resources are met - Create set of gender sensitive monitoring indicators to be adopted by policy makers and parishioners in order to sharpen the gender analysis, audit, and focus

SSA-D	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	South Africa	Sudan
Activities (or planned activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secondary research - field research in 6 municipalities - 6 municipal-level validation/feedback workshops, with a total of 158 participants - department level validation/feedback workshop - further field research in 2 case study communities - 30 people participate in capacity-building workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review - Baseline Institutional Assessment at district level through focus group discussions in 6 case study districts and stakeholder meeting - 880 people surveyed in quantitative citizen survey in 6 case study districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review - Desk research - 12 consultative meetings in 6 states selected with participation by 336 women representing 110 women's associations - 48 in-depth interviews with LGA personnel - 247 municipal staff interviews - 258 interviews with elected female and male politicians - household survey involving 1,200 female adults and youths - 48 focus groups (4 in each of 12 LGAs) - 111 women participate in constituency-building workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review - Document review - Case studies - Project Analysis - 30 projects (total) in 3 municipalities analyzed - 70 in-depth interviews - 51 focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature review and desk research - establishment of indicators in each sector, via roundtable discussions - field survey in selected states - feedback and validation workshops
Capacity-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project leader gained project management skills and experience working with donor - project assistant gained project management skills - project assistant and other researchers gained exposure and experience on gender issues - community members gained experience in interaction with local authorities and other officials - capacity-building for community members in various areas through workshops 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project leader renews research and academic writing skills - researchers gain skills such as leading focus groups, in-depth interviewing, leadership training - women participants in constituency-building workshops learn... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research assistants gain experience - member of research team gains academic and formal research experience, begins PhD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interaction with community members, local officials etc. - raised awareness of issues
Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 presentations to national workshops on agricultural research - plans for documentary film? - plans for information posters? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project results to be published in book form (ms in preparation as of February 07) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed project reports - 6 dissemination workshops (co-funded by EU) - 2 presentations to academic conferences - presentation to IDRC Buenos Aires Decentralization workshop - 1 article to be published in journal - 2 contributions to books (1 abstract, 1 paper) - reports in policy-oriented publications - abstract submitted to Inclusive Cities Conference, March 2007 - popular format version of research produced for wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meeting with Ministry of Education - dissemination workshops at project end

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SSA-D	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	South Africa	Sudan
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> distribution to policymakers, officials, NGOs, activists, etc. - report in HSRC News (aimed at policy community) - other publication possibilities under consideration 	
Main Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women are at a disadvantage in terms of their participation in planning and resource management at the local level - women are not elected to local government in the study zone - constraints on women's production, status and participation include: cultural factors, discrimination against women, illiteracy, lack of access to information - decentralization has not increased women's decision making power over natural resources - there is a disconnect between national gender policies and sectoral policies on women and what occurs at the local level 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decentralization has not improved or increased women's participation or political effectiveness - lack of awareness of gender issues both among citizens and in government - factors such as culture, institutional structure, partisan politics, and corruption all undermine women's participation, and the impact of women's participation on gender equity and women's rights - absence of constituency for women's empowerment - need and demand for gender training in government and civil society, to improve gender sensitive planning and implementation and to help build a constituency in favour of women's rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national policies and directives on gender are not well integrated into the IDP process nor well reflected in what happens locally - women's participation and incorporation of gender perspectives is more difficult at local than at national levels - women tend to be integrated in line with traditional roles, relating to practical rather than strategic gender needs - national guidelines and conditional resource allocations from the centre do contribute somewhat to targeting and women's participation 	<p>- women's access to services and resources not enhanced through decentralization because of insufficient revenues to cover responsibilities transferred to local level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of understanding of decentralization (federal) system throughout government
Policy Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement of local authorities and politicians may raise their awareness of gender issues in community planning - presentation of results in national conference may raise awareness of issues among researchers and government officials - participation in research by community members, and training workshops, may increase community members' capacity to participate in development plans and improve attention to gender in local natural resource management 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - indirect as result of gender budgeting workshops, constituency building activities, awareness generated via research process itself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spreading policy-relevant knowledge via workshops and policy papers - raising awareness of gender issue in decentralized context via contacts with officials at various state levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interaction with Ministry of Education - gender indicators created (how will they be used?)
Other Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - researchers learned about working with community members 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulated more attention to gender issues in research in Department of Local Government - generated data on women in local government 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement of community members and local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential to compare impacts of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project seems to have collected large amount of data related to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - considers decentralization as a system, paying attention to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attention to fiscal dimensions

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SSA-D	Benin	Ghana	Nigeria	South Africa	Sudan
Strengths	<p>authorities in project through their participation in meetings and workshops seems to have affected the course of the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - collection of local data on community planning and land management in humid zones 	<p>devolution vs deconcentration on gender issues in decentralization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - looks at district level of government 	<p>women and local government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research looked not only at women's participation but at factors affecting participation, attitudes, and impacts - research situated within historical and comparative perspective - project drew on existing conceptual and theoretical models 	<p>linkages amongst levels of government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good balance of empirical research and analysis - systematic research plan - solid data generated - likelihood of good impact through policy and academic circles 	
Weaknesses/ room for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - links between decentralization, gender and natural resources weakly conceptualized - decentralization weakly analyzed - minimal analysis of research results (e.g. causality, implications, linkages, etc.) - might have benefited from more systematic literature review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apparent lack of commitment on part of lead researcher - possible weakness in the comparability of the two models - project attempted to cover too much ground, so that outcomes were likely to be broad but lacking in depth of analysis - incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of data seems weak - was data collection actually "participatory"—what does this actually mean? - breadth of data possibly at the expense of depth and analysis - conceptual framework and use of gender terms sometimes problematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possibly could have benefited from closer links to communities (i.e. some kind of participatory or action focus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -how will the indicators generated be used created? -large amount of data not all integrated analytically -too much territory (geographic and thematic) for in depth coverage

Annex 6: Comparison of PAD Decentralization Series Objectives

SSA-D	SA-D	LAC-D
Overall: To generate and support research on the linkages between state decentralization reforms and decentralized systems of government and the protection and realization of women's rights in Sub-Saharan Africa.	Overall: To generate and support research on the linkages between the process of decentralisation and its implications for women's rights and empowerment.	Overall: To ...support research that empirically investigates whether and how contemporary decentralization reforms, in practice, contribute to or on the contrary hinder the realization and protection of women's and girls' civil, political, social, economic and/or cultural rights.
To support research that will document and analyze specific reforms which have worked to promote women's rights, and/or reforms that have created barriers to the protection and realization of these rights	Producing a body of policy relevant research on the experience of decentralisation in South Asia from the perspective of women and gender power relations.	To support research that will document and analyze specific decentralization reforms, which have worked to promote women's and girl's rights, and/or reforms that have created barriers to the protection and realization of these rights.
to assist in strengthening the community of practice of researchers working on decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa, and encourage them to re-examine decentralization reforms from the point of view of women's rights	Using the process of competitive grants to explore the possibility of creating knowledge networks beyond national borders in South Asia and, beyond, for generating knowledge on the questions of decentralisation and agency of the politically, socially and economically marginalised genders, ethnicities and castes.	To assist in strengthening the community of practice of researchers and partner women's organisations working on decentralization in Latin America and the Caribbean and encourage them to re-examine decentralization reforms from the point of view of women's rights.
to produce a body of related case studies for comparative analysis		To facilitate the sharing of knowledge and analysis amongst the awardees and between them and those of the other two regions covered by previous phases of the competition.
to contribute to the systematic gathering of knowledge existing in this area and make it more easily available		To encourage the formulation of evidence-based policy recommendations on the reform, monitoring, use or implementation of decentralization policies, measures and programs so that they contribute to the realization and protection of women's rights.
to support research dissemination activities that will inform other researchers, citizens and policy-makers on the impact of state decentralization on the achievement of African women's civil, political, social, economic and/or cultural rights, and on gender dimensions of state decentralization;		
to generate research results of interest and use to a number of other programs in the Centre		
to inform an internal discussion at the Centre on how it might position itself on the question of development and human rights.		

Annex 7: Evaluation Sample: Competition Awardees and Projects

	Project Title	Institution	Profile
GGL			
Amazonia	Facing Globalization: Strategies of Social Mobilization by People in Extractive Activities in the Amazonian Forests of Bolivia, Brazil, and Peru		Activist network, activist orientation/academic background in anthropology
Cameroon	The Impact of the Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline Operations on Gender Relations, Land and Community Livelihood in Selected Project Sites	University of Buea, Cameroon	University, academic focus in agriculture
Ghana	Gender Equity, Rural Livelihoods and Land Tenure Reforms in Ghana	Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research, University of Ghana	University, academic
Kenya (project terminated early)	How HIV/AIDS Shapes Land Inheritance Patterns and Food Production for Women in Kenya	Women and Law in East Africa	Advocacy NGO
Vietnam	Women's Rights and Land Access in Vietnam	Institute for Social Development Studies	Research organization, academic orientation
SSA-D			
Bénin	Gender and Floodplain Management in the Collines Department of Bénin: Support for the Role of Female Agriculturalists in a Decentralized Economy	Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques, Université d'Abomey-Calavi	University, academics, multidisciplinary, focus on agricultural economics
Ghana (project terminated early)	Institutional Change for Women's Rights: Comparing the Effectiveness of Devolution and Deconcentration Arrangements in Gender-Equality Advocacy in Northern Ghana (project terminated early)	Institute for Policy Alternatives, Accra	Consulting/research, academic political science
Nigeria	Engendering Local Level Governance for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: A Learning Experience	Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	University, academic researchers, recognized gender expert
South Africa	Women, Decentralisation and Integrated Development Planning in South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, shifted to Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria	University, academic urban planning experts with experience on local government and decentralization
Sudan	Impact of Decentralization Policies on Women Rights in Sudan: A Case Study of the Impact of Decentralization on Health, Education and Use of Natural Resources	The Gender Centre for Research and Training, Khartoum	Research/Advocacy organization, strong gender advocacy background
SA-D			
India-Rajasthan	Strengthening Women's Participation in Public Sphere	Unnati Organisation for Development Education, Ahmedabad	NGO with training and governance focus
India-Gujarat and Maharashtra	Water Rights as Women's Rights? Assessing the Scope for Women's	Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem	NGO, research/activist,

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	Empowerment through Decentralised Water Governance in Maharashtra and Gujarat	Management, Pune	sectoral focus
India-Kerala	Gendering Governance or Governing Women? Politics, Patriarchy, and Democratic Decentralisation in Kerala	Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapura	Research centre, multidisciplinary academic
Nepal	Decentralisation and Promotion of Women's Rights in Nepal: Exploring Constraints, Opportunities and Intervention Avenues	Forest Action, Kathmandu	Field/research NGO, sectoral focus
Pakistan	Gender, Power-relations and Decentralisation in Pakistan	Rural Support Programmes Network, Islamabad	NGO network, academics and local partners
LAC-D			
Bolivia	Gender and tension over collective and individual rights to water: Effects of the decentralization process in the Bolivian case	PROAGRO, Cochabamba	Sectoral NGO, multidisciplinary irrigation engineering and sociology
Ecuador	Women as Social and Political Subject in Local Governance and Decentralization Projects in Ecuador: Lessons from Four Municipal Cases	Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos, Quito	Research centre/NGO, sociology and gender backgrounds, previous experience on gender and decentralization
El Salvador/Honduras	Contributions to Decentralization and Democratic Governance: Municipal actors and local and national mechanisms for gender equity and women's rights in El Salvador and Honduras	Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo	NGO/advocacy organization, activist and politics experience, gender focus
Paraguay	Health Decentralization in Paraguay: A Contribution to Gender Equality?	Centro de Documentación y Estudio	Research/advocacy organization, multidisciplinary health and public policy, some gender specialist

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Annex 8: List of Documents Consulted

Project documents:

PADs for all competitions
Calls for proposals for all competitions
Winning project proposals for all competitions
Available project reports (interim, final) for all competitions
Memoranda of Grant Conditions from all projects
Memorandum of Grant Conditions with FLACSO-Argentina
FLACSO-Argentina reports to IDRC
Various trip reports
Miscellaneous project related documents, correspondence, available rPCRs, minutes, including:

Carney, Judith A. 2002. "Report on 'Gender, Globalization, and Land Tenure,' the IDRC Gender Unit Methodology Workshop: Ottawa, September 9-13, 2002."

IDRC Gender Unit. 2005. "Gender, Globalization and Land Tenure Publication Workshop: Final Report."

IDRC Gender Unit. "Reflections on the Gender Unit Research Competitions: 2001-2003: Future Directions" (Powerpoint presentation slides)

"Términos de referencia para la Selección de la Institución Coordinadora del Concurso de Investigación 'Descentralización y Derechos de las Mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe.'"

WRC. 2006. "Final Report on the International Workshop on Decentralization and Women's Rights, Buenos Aires, August 27-31 2006."

WRC. 2008. "Workshop: Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Research Findings and Priorities for Future Work. January 22, 2008, Dakar, Senegal. Final Report."

WRC. 2008. "Public Event: Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa: What has it meant for women's political participation and access to services? Panel presentations and public discussion. Dakar, Senegal. Final Report."

Background papers for three decentralization competitions:

Cos-Montiel, Francisco. 2006. "Developing a Research Agenda on Decentralisation and Women's Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: Background Paper for the IDRC 2005 Gender Unit Research Competition."

MacLean, Melissa. 2003. "Gender Dimensions of Decentralization: Developing a Research Agenda."

Melissa MacLean, Consultant
Final Evaluation Report: Evaluation of WRC Research Competitions Program
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Mukhopadhyay, Maitrayee. 2005. "Developing a Research Agenda on the Gender Dimensions of Decentralisation: An issues paper for the IDRC 2005 Gender Unit Research Competition."

Other IDRC small grants reviews and related documents:

Barnard, Geoff, Liz Carlile, and Deepayan Basu Ray. 2006. "Maximizing the Impact of Development Research: How can funders encourage more effective development communication?" FINAL REPORT (draft) Based on a Workshop held at the Institute of Development Studies 16-18 October 2006 (available on line at: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-118748-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

Bernard, Anne. 2006. *Lessons from IDRC evaluations on Competitive Grants: A review of 5 evaluations.* (available on line at http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11501389001Lessons_from_IDRC_evaluation_on_Competitive_Grants.pdf)

IDRC. *Corporate Strategy and Programme Framework 2005-2010.* Ottawa. (available on line at http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11250758901CSPF_2005_e.pdf)

Stein, Janice Gross, Richard Stren, Joy Fitzgibbon and Melissa MacLean. 2001. *Networks of Knowledge: Collaborative Innovation in International Learning.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tillman, George. 2003. "Review of the Small Grants Mechanism." (available on line at: http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11501339211Small_Grants_Mechanism.pdf)

Tuozzo, Maria Fernanda and Diana Tussie. 2006. "The Governance and Coordination of Networks: An Analysis of the Findings from an IDRC Strategic Evaluation (1995-2005)." IDRC.

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Annex 9: Profile of Evaluation Consultant

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Academic Qualifications

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